KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

AS HER SISTER KNEW HER

NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

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By

NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

With Illustrations

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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'The good stars met in her element,—made her of spirit, fire, and dew.'

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K. D. W.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 28th, 1856
Harrow-on-the-Hill, England, August 24th, 1923

Kate Douglas Wiggin

AS HER SISTER KNEW HER

CHAPTER I

'THE SMALL SISTER'

But were another childhood world my share,
I would be born a little sister there.

THE few years that separated me from my sister, Kate, seemed in my childhood to be a series of majestic steps leading upward to a golden throne whereon sat my idol, wise beyond compare, kindly and beneficent in her decrees, and clever, brilliant, and resourceful beyond the wildest imagination of small and ordinary persons like myself. I regarded her as a splendid, life-giving sun, while I was the smallest sort of an insignificant satellite, dependent upon her for my place in the planetary system.

When one considers that, though not quite four years my senior, she taught me to write and instructed me in my notes upon the piano, that she superintended my practising and guided my infant efforts in composition, it is clear that my estimate of her abilities as leader

and able pedagogue was not greatly exaggerated.

I do not remember that she shared in my plays to any extent, and no doubt they seemed dull to a person of her incredible dexterity in the game of jackstones, her superhuman activity and staying power in rope-skipping, and her versatility and deadly aim in croquet. No, in these sports I could never attempt to share; but she remained my guide, philosopher, and friend, even when she ran away from me with her all-too-swift companions, to engage in some mysterious revel from which my unfortunate youth excluded me.

Later in life when we grew to be, if not ladies, at least 'the beginnings of ladies,' as Rebecca said to Emma Jane, our ages at one bound became the same; and though my idol neither then, nor ever, descended, in my mind, from the golden throne I had fashioned for her, I began to sit on a little higher step, myself, now and then, and ventured, perhaps, to criticise the metre of her verses, or to take liberties with her proof-sheets.

The stern critic would say that such an attitude of mind on the part of a biographer would make a just estimate of his subject quite impossible, and this is not to be denied. Let me say here, however, that I have no intention of writing a biography, and certainly not an

appreciation of my sister and her work. I might as well attempt to deliver a judgment upon my own life and achievements, for in neither case could I stand far enough away from my subject to get a proper focus for the photograph. 'It may as well be admitted,' as Christopher Morley said about a late biography, 'that this is an utterly "literary" book; it must be read not for any annotation of facts, but for a sound of vanished voices.'

When Kate wrote her 'New Chronicles of Rebecca,' she declared that she could not put all she seemed to know about her heroine into one volume, so she was obliged to make the second, which 'is not a sequel,' she tells us, 'but a further filling-in of incidents from the child's chequered existence.'

That is all I mean this little book to be — 'a further filling-in of incidents' to make the life-story more complete, or, if you wish to phrase it in a different fashion, the plucking of a few more flowers from my sister's garden of memory.

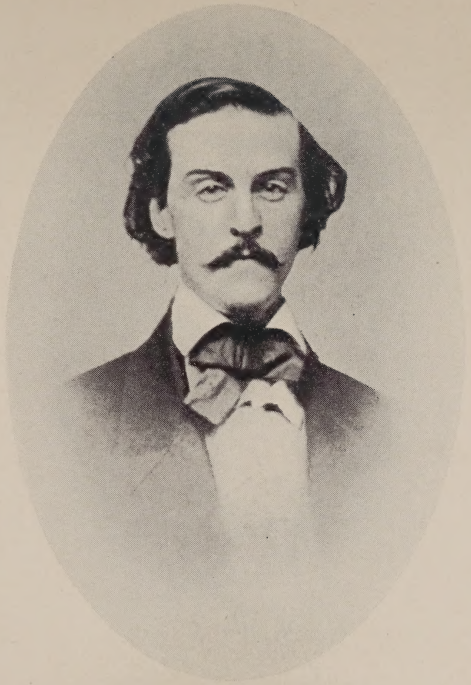
Just as, in her Autobiography,[1] she relates that she never seems to have observed the 'Small Sister' until the red-letter day when she perceived her on the back seat of the carry-all that was bearing us to the country 'for good and all'; so the 'Small Sister' has no

[1] *My Garden of Memory.* (Houghton Mifflin Company.)

recollection of her until a certain enchanted morning of snow and sunshine. It was Hollis, Maine; it was winter, and one of those days of pungent odor of fir and pine, of glittering snow and crystalline purity of air that only Maine knows. At the top of a hill stood Kate, just alighted from a flight, it would seem, so little did her feet appear to touch the ground. She held a sled by the cord, her cheeks were pink as wild roses, her eyes full of radiance, and her fair hair streamed over her shoulders from under her blue-and-white hood. It was the combination of color, perhaps — the pink, the blue, the gold, the glittering background — that fixed the picture in my memory; or perhaps it was the lightness, the brightness, the radiance of the childish figure itself. Whatever the 'fixative,' the picture has stood the test of time and not one of its colors has faded.

My first memory of my mother must be of about the same date, and I see her leaning from an upper window in the Hollis cottage, looking down upon the two of us as we walked hand in hand to the gate. I see her smile — the amused, tender smile that grown-ups give to quaint little people, sometimes, and I know what George Eliot meant by 'the benediction of a gaze.'

> 'Then, with the benediction of her gaze
> Clung to us, lessening, and pursued us still.'



ROBERT NOAH SMITH

HELEN ELIZABETH (DYER) SMITH

I have said that my sister in those early days was too exalted a being to share in my trivial pastimes, but I do remember two amusements in which we both engaged and which, by some chance, were never discovered by the parental authorities. Back of our Maine cottage, and a few rods away, ran the beautiful Saco River, so beloved by us both from the day we first heard its music. At this point it broadened out into quieter waters and along its banks rafts of logs were moored, fastened together by chains. It was our delight to run with our light feet along these rafts, each log tipping and swaying as we passed and giving us an exquisite sensation of danger, of fear lest we lose our footing and slip under the raft. Looking back upon this pastime, I fancy that the fear was well-grounded, but it was a delightful fear, akin to the thrill of a flight in a swing far up in the air.

Below our cottage, a few hundred yards down the village road, a bridge tied the two townships of Hollis and Buxton together, and on the Buxton side, in childhood days a saw-mill buzzed and whirred. Here was enacted another amusement, which may not have been over-dangerous, or it would not have been countenanced by the miller and his men, but of which my mother would certainly have disapproved had she known of it. The great pine trees, rough and scaly as the dragons in a

fairy-tale, were laid on sliding platforms in the mill and gradually drawn toward a circular saw which cut them into slices like those of a pineapple, as they slid between its teeth. Our game was to sit on the very end of these rough logs, as on the backs of safely tethered monsters, and be drawn as near as possible to the saw, leaping from our seat with peals of laughter at the very last possible moment. Looking back upon this ride, it seems as fraught with possibilities of danger as Europa's on the white bull; but danger is only a word in childhood, and a word which has not yet gathered its connotations.

In her 'Garden of Memory' my sister has described our successful educational experiments with frogs, but not in the taming and training of domestic fowl. Part of our home duties being to feed, water, and look after the comfort of the hens of the establishment, we proceeded to provide them all with suitable names and teach them to come when called. Three practically orphan chickens, deserted by a heartless mother, we christened Priscilla, Miles Standish, and John Alden, and soon by practically unlimited feeding made them so tame and so inert as to allow us to pick them up wherever they were found and carry them about under our arms. We fashioned for ourselves small muslin bags with the letters

'G. B. C.' (Grasshopper Bag Club) embroidered upon them, and going out in the standing corn filled them as full of grasshoppers as time would allow, tying them around the necks of our Pilgrim fowls when we returned and allowing them to lunch at their leisure. Later in the season we discovered that the names we had bestowed upon our pets were complete misfits, for Priscilla developed a brilliant comb, long tail-feathers, and a raucous crow, while Miles Standish and John Alden were soon found to be depositing eggs in the henhouse with great regularity.

We had dolls, of course, the favorite specimens being twin blonde and brunette beauties of French extraction, with real hair, and Parian marble heads that turned (not turned by consciousness of their own charms, you understand, but turned mechanically) upon a pivot, thus giving great variety of manner and expression to their owners. As to any garments that I ever made for my dark-haired infant, history is silent, but a complete doll's wardrobe is still to be seen at 'Quillcote,' our summer home in Maine, every article of which was fashioned by my sister's clever fingers. There is a discreet, early-Victorian night-dress, which is an admirable evidence of the change in styles, with its long full sleeves ending in a wrist-band edged with 'tatting,' its high-

collared neck, also tatting-edged, and its full skirt, wide enough to envelop half a dozen dolls of to-day. There is an equally discreet chemise, long and full, made of good stout stuff suitable for a New England winter; and there is a neat little school-dress of brown gingham, with a cape of the same material. Then there is a morning wrapper of yellow cambric, elaborately trimmed with serpentine braid, a green gingham afternoon dress with a sash, and a very grand white lawn, low-necked and short-sleeved, voluminously ruffled, and, prettiest touch of all, provided with a little black silk bib-apron trimmed with scarlet braid. Surely no doll of the day could have been better dressed; and that she was a budding housekeeper is quite clear, for her wardrobe holds not only the black silk trifle but a variety of white and colored aprons, adapted to all uses. As to the 'tatting' that adorned the dolls' under-garments, there should have been enough of that to trim the 'Great Bed at Ware,' for I see clearly as I look back upon those days, the little black shuttle forever in Kate's hands and the spool of white cotton revolving with incredible rapidity.

We were, however, my sister and I, not especially fond of playing with dolls, for we were inveterate readers and needed much time for books. One of my mother's gifts was that

K. D. S.

N. A. S.

THE SISTERS

of reading aloud with great charm and expression, and though one of the most reserved persons I ever knew, and one of the most averse to betraying emotion of any kind, she yet lost herself completely at such times, and, while her eyes were on the page, would change her voice to suit the various characters in the story, and glow with enthusiasm at their exploits, or quiver with delight. I can see my beloved stepfather, tired with a country doctor's long day, sitting by the winter fire hearing my mother read aloud one of Dickens's novels, which must have been coming out about that time in the paper-covered 'Plum Pudding Edition.' We two young things, the little brother being safely tucked away in bed, would be quietly playing in the bay window, perhaps, with its stand of blossoming plants and its frame of English ivy, but we were listening with all our ears, nevertheless, to the entrancing tale as it flowed from mother's lips. What wonder, then, brought up on Dickens as we were, that our sled was named the 'Artful Dodger,' our dogs, 'Pip,' and 'Pocket'; that we called our Orphan Asylum of paper dolls 'Dothegirls Hall,' and christened the boat on the lily pond, 'The Little Em'ly!' For many years, I preserved and still preserve the seat-check for the Dickens Reading which my mother attended in a neighboring city, con-

sidering it, I suppose, to be as near an approach to the personality of my beloved author as I was ever likely to make. Such a relic, I should say, is like Hood's Sarsaparilla, 'peculiar to itself,' for I doubt if it finds a duplicate in the collection of any other Dickens enthusiast.

It will be remembered, perhaps, by those who have read my sister's Autobiography, that she once travelled side by side with Mr. Dickens on a wonderful journey from Portland to Boston, but such miraculous occurrences, I must have reasoned in my infant mind, were for the gods, not for their humble worshippers, and I clung the faster to my bit of blue cardboard.

As our mother was a busy housewife, with only the more or less intermittent and inefficient general servant that a rustic community affords, and as there was soon a little brother, Philip, to bring up, we managed our own pre-school education, and selected our own literature, outside of the books to which our mother's evening reading introduced us. I say 'selected,' but there was very little selection about the matter, for our little Maine village was far too insignificant to boast a Public Library and we must depend upon home resources and extended borrowing from bookish neighbors. To a relative a little farther up the elm-shaded road, we were indebted for the

never-to-be-forgotten 'Undine,' 'Sintram,' and 'The Amber Witch'; also, I think, for 'Two Years before the Mast,' and Irving's 'Mahomet.'

Our literary course did not lead us, you observe, along streets of Washingtonian regularity, but rather along leisurely 'Boston Cow-paths,' whereon we might stop and browse as we liked. We had no juvenile books, save the long-outgrown 'Mother Goose,' 'Cock Robin,' 'Swiss Family Robinson,' and Miss Mulock's 'Collection of Fairy-Tales,' so we began at one end of our parents' bookcases and cheerfully read to the other, encountering on the way 'The Martyrs of Spain,' 'Festus,' 'Typee,' 'The Scottish Chiefs,' 'Thaddeus of Warsaw,' 'Arabian Nights,' the entire editions of Sir Walter Scott, Thackeray, and Dickens, Webster's Dictionary, a 'Life of P. T. Barnum,' 'Robinson Crusoe,' 'The Minister's Wooing,' 'The Pearl of Orr's Island,' a fat green Shakespeare in one volume, Byron's 'Poems,' and those of Mrs. Hemans, and a few French and Spanish books, which we gazed upon longingly as probably containing the jewels of the whole collection, but jewels as yet quite unattainable. The 'Life' of that shrewd and truly American genius, P. T. Barnum, Kate particularly affected, which seems to indicate the beginnings of that delight in people, as people, which

was so strong a part of her nature, but when she stood on a chair and lifted down the bulky Phineas from an upper shelf, I always went up to 'Uncle Henry's' and borrowed 'Undine' all over again.

In addition to books we were as well furnished with periodical literature as most families of the day, I suppose, the New York 'Tribune' and the Portland 'Transcript' appearing with regularity, as well as the 'Atlantic,' 'Littell's Living Age,' 'Old and New,' and later, 'Our Young Folks,' which gave us unlimited delight.

Our sleek heads were not always bent above books, however, for as we grew older there was much outdoor play, and for the elder sister a joyous participation in everything that went on in the twin villages that was suitable for her age, whether Sunday-School picnics, flag-raisings, spelling-schools, church sociables, sewing meetings, or musical evenings. For these last she was in especial request, for she was a natural musician, and not only a student of music, but possessed to the end of her days the precious gift of straying, as it were, to the piano in the firelight, or dusk of evening, and weaving the threads of old melodies, grave and gay, into a magical, many-colored carpet that transported her hearers into far lands of reverie and recollection. She had, from childhood, a touch upon the keys that thrilled their

sensitive wires, a throb in her voice whenever she sang, or whenever she read aloud, that brought swift tears, were the hearers at all susceptible. Indeed, one tender-hearted friend of later days always attended the Annual Readings at the old Tory Hill Meeting-House in Maine with a generous supply of handkerchiefs, alleging that she invariably wept the moment Kate began to speak, no matter on what subject.

Although our parents, as well as the little brother, later in life, were as 'passionate readers' as ourselves, you must not suppose for a moment that we were not often called away from books to serve as general helpers in what was going on in the household. Our mother was too notable in all the arts of housewifery to allow her daughters to grow up ignorant of such duties, and we both made patchwork under her direction, oversewed sheets, so many inches a day, and Kate, at least, became quite a capable little cook. Her Diary, covering a part of one of those years, holds many references to browning buckwheat cakes, making milk toast, and fish-balls, chopping and flavoring mince-meat, etc., and I retain vivid recollections of a certain blueberry cake she used to concoct which was considered by the family as without a rival in its line.

Yes, the youthful Kate was a busy, happy, old-fashioned little girl in a little old-fashioned village, learning and practising all the old-fashioned arts and making the 'Small Sister's' life a delightful one in the devoted and affectionate ways, which are not of the old fashion only, but of all fashion.

These childhood years together were not long ones, however, for the elder sister was obviously so gifted that our parents sought greater educational advantages for her than our little village could afford and she was early sent to boarding-school in a neighboring town.

'Yet the twin habit of that early time
Lingered for long about the heart and tongue:
We had been natives of one happy clime,
And the dear accent to our utterance clung!'

CHAPTER II

LITERARY BEGINNINGS

MY sister says somewhere in an interview, referring to her early years in New England: 'Those are the years that count most. We learn much afterwards and much of our originality is lost in the process; we love, marry, accomplish a little, or a great deal, as the case may be, and finally we die, but the first ten years, in the stocking of our memories and the development of our imaginations, in the growing of all those long roots out of which springs real life, these do far more for us than all the rest.'

It was somewhat less than that length of time, so far as a memory particularly resistant to dates can recall, that we lived as a family in our little Maine village, but that the author of the future was in reality 'stocking her memory' and 'developing her imagination' during those years is evident enough to any one familiar with her books.

The Diary already referred to, covering a few months of early girlhood, which lies before me as I write, shows, according to its owner's criticism, 'not a single trace of literary talent.'

The fact that it is clearly and simply written, with no blots, crossed-out lines, or mis-spelled words is beside the mark, for these excellences have nothing to do with literature, though they do show the careful workmanship and attention to detail which characterized all Kate Douglas Wiggin's writings.

As one reads the various entries, however, in the faded childish hand of long-ago, one is impressed with the simplicity and sincerity of the record. There was nothing thrilling to set down in the annals of the quiet neighborhood, but it was evident that the child fulfilled instinctively the two duties which Robert Louis Stevenson says are incumbent upon any man who enters on the business of writing: 'truth to the fact and a good spirit in the treatment. . . . It must always be foul to tell what is false,' he goes on to say; 'and it can never be safe to suppress what is true. . . . He should tell of the wise and good people in the past, to excite us by example, and of these he should tell soberly and truthfully, not glossing faults, that we may neither grow discouraged with ourselves nor exacting to our neighbors.'

This Diary tells soberly enough of early rising, morning prayers, household duties faithfully performed, regular practising of music-lessons, playing in the evening for father and mother to dance, errands with the 'Small

SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 1867.

I got up this morning at twenty minutes past seven then I went down stairs and cleared up the parlor which took me till breakfast time after breakfast we held a meeting read the verses for the day and then Charlie in the Bible class Nora and I went out to feed the hens we found one egg after we got through I went to see my things and went for my milk after I got home we went up to Freddy Archer's to spend the day Norma Cousin Emily and all us children I wrote a little while in the new Harper the story that I read first was "Mrs Potter's mother in law" it was very funny but it didn't sound true like next I prayed and stolen a real nice story about a little girl whose was stolen from her mother and a long time after was discovered then I and Norma went home to help her Cousin Emily went out with me the main dish furnished and I pounded Beef Steak with a broken plate then I helped the sausages for dinner dished set the table then we sat down we had a real nice dinner Sausages Beef Steak Pickles Turnips Potatoes Home Biscuits for dessert Pumpkin and Apple Pies Coffee Apple Sauce after dinner I helped clear up and then went a little then Nora and I cleared up the Book Case then tables then we went up to Ella's and heard Freddy play on his Melodeon then went down stairs I played a little with Uncle Henry eat some candy and then went home After Supper I dressed up and went to the Bible Class I read Verse and answered three or four questions then went home talked a little and then went to bed.

FIRST PAGE OF DIARY

Sister' here and there about the village, rambles in the woods and by the river, drives with father on his calls to his patients, family outings to the home of a relative, but, uneventful as is the narrative, it *flows*. Its author knew where to begin and left off when she had nothing more to say; she had a sense of form and structure and she had, she really had, a *style*, if style, in the literary sense, means individual expression, a manner of saying and writing things which is one's own and gives a touch of personality to the printed page.

You say that this would be impossible for a child not yet in her teens, but there you are mistaken. It is the years that smooth out our individuality as we are turned in the mangle of the schools; it is grown-people who are like one another, never babies.

It is to be remembered in this connection, too, that the future author was familiar with none but the best in literature, that her 'fat, green Shakespeare' was limp with reading, and that she daily heard the organ tones of the English Bible at morning prayers, and not only heard it then, but was bound by a solemn promise to her Sunday-School teacher to read a chapter to herself every night. If a child nourished on such fare could not evolve from it some suitable form of expression for herself, she must have been dull, indeed, and to this

child expression was essential, whether in words or music.

Mrs. Ruggles, of the 'Birds' Christmas Carol,' a lady especially beloved by all my sister's readers, remarked to her offspring on the occasion of a certain Christmas dinner, 'I wish I could git it inter your heads that it ain't so much what yer say, as the way yer say it,' and the old oak at Dodona never rustled a more notable statement.

In later years when we congratulated the 'great American Authoress,' as we jestingly called her in the family, upon some success she had achieved in a public address, she would always parry the compliment by quoting her own Mrs. McGrill: 'I hadn't very much to say,' she would continue modestly, 'not nearly as much as some of the other speakers, but I do seem to be able to make people listen.'

After all, that is the test of every art, is it not? If we cannot make people listen to our pictures, our poems, our sermons, our music, our plays, we have spoken to little purpose, unless indeed it be of some value to have clarified our own ideas by striving to express them.

Two instances of the appeal which my sister's 'way of saying things' made to her hearers come to me as I write.

In the one case, in replying to a 'question-

naire' received by post from an unknown stock-broker who wished to enlarge his circle of patrons, her answers so impressed him that he wrote back at once to ask if he might reprint the entire set in his next circular. She had, of course, signed her letter as Kate D. Riggs, so that its recipient had no idea of the literary value of the communication.

In the second instance she was asked by the graduating class of a business college to write its members 'a farewell letter of advice' upon the completion of their course and their entrance into the world of affairs. The request appealed to her sense of humor, inasmuch as her knowledge of business was purely theoretical, and she promptly returned the desired letter, which was acclaimed by the class, published in 'The Outlook,' reprinted all over the country, and has just been asked for as an item in a forthcoming 'Compendium of Business Knowledge.'

One more word should be said, perhaps, about this Diary, which the grown-up Kate declared so absolutely unpromising from a literary standpoint; — it contains not only expressions of interest and pleasure in articles and stories that our mother had been reading to us, but trenchant criticisms upon books that had been lent or given to her, 'I read a story in Uncle Henry's "Harper's Magazine" to-day,'

she writes; 'it was real funny, but it didn't sound true.'

Another entry runs: 'My Sunday-School book to-day was about such a good little girl, but she wasn't interesting. I should think the people that write books might tell sometimes about a bad little girl and how she grew good. It would be a lot more fun.'

This Diary, begun on Sunday, March 24, 1867, with no explanation whatever as to where it came from, nor why it was to be written at all, ends as abruptly on Saturday, July 13th, of the same year and nothing of the kind succeeded it, save that, later in life, my sister always kept a 'Line-a-Day' book, which held, however, little but dates and notes of travel.

In my own case the Diary habit was suddenly broken off when I discovered an intimate friend poring over my records on an afternoon when she had called and been asked to await my return. 'I'll wear no heart on my sleeve for daws to peck at, after this,' I inwardly remarked, but in Kate's little journal were no secrets and no food for daws.

One more relic of my sister's childhood days I hold, and that is her Doll's Dictionary, a complete and perfect little book which would be of great service in Doll-Land to-day; that is, if the dwellers in that country have the

same orthographic difficulties as their owners. 'Nellie,' the fair-haired beauty for whom the book was written, was presented with it on a certain birthday morning and read with pleasure, I am sure, the dedication on the last page:

Nellie

From the
Author,
her Mother.

The name of the Dictionary, clearly printed on the title page is:

Smith's Spelling
and Definer.

And on the reverse of the page is:

Hollis

Entered according
to Act of Congress
1866.

The book is an inch and a half square and bears on each page two columns of words, first in one syllable and of the same termination, as, *cart, dart, bell, cell,* etc. Then we come to more difficult words; as, *brown, frown, munch,* and *lunch;* and next leap boldly into two syllables, *cowslip, tea-cup, cob-web,* etc. All these are clearly printed, correctly spelled, and the words of two syllables are provided with accent marks.

Then the infant dictionary-maker begins on

definitions; as, *beak — bill, coast — shore, hue — colour*, and next soars off to really splendid words; as, *indolent, cataplasm, incubus, quintessence, paucity* and *oscillate.*

The book ends with a six-line verse that Nellie was expected to learn by heart, and though my acquaintance with the young person ended early in life, I am convinced that on her entrance into society she astonished the world by the purity and precision of her language.

Another tiny book, 'Little Arthur's Dream of the Fairies,' still to be found in my desk, was printed throughout by Kate's clever fingers and set down at my dictation. I can well remember my amanuensis seated on the front steps of the Hollis cottage laboriously following the flights of my fancy while I paced to and fro on the grass beside her and babbled of fays and sprites and magic revels.

The elder sister was not overfond of occupying lowly seats and seldom was asked to play second fiddles, so I am lost in wonder at her condescension on this occasion.

I can but suppose that the exercise formed part of a course in composition which she had outlined for me and which she insisted that I should complete, her ability and firmness as a pedagogue being already noted with amusement by our parents.

Froebel says, 'The clearer the thread that

runs backward to our childhood, the clearer will be our onward glance to the goal,' and one would have needed no magic powers in those far-off days to have glimpsed the goal to which our childish feet were tending.

One more encouragement to the pursuit of literature we had in the insatiable demands of the little brother, Philip, into whose capacious maw stories vanished like coal into the furnace of an Atlantic liner. Learning to read apparently played no part in his life-plan, and why should it have done so when a devoted mother and two patient and long-suffering sisters could always be summoned to his side as story-tellers?

What child would want a book if he could command the services of three professional bards? — and this most ancient and honorable calling we were all obliged to follow to keep any kind of peace in the family.

Perrault tells us that if his famous collection of fairy-lore has any merit whatever, it is because he first told all the stories to his own children around the evening fire and thus received the benefit of their unerring criticism. As to what faults our little brother may have found in his mother's narratives, I cannot say, but he was perfectly frank with his sisters, and his observations, though sometimes painful, were probably just.

My memory holds no image of Kate as a child, save the snow-picture already painted. Whether, once fully seen, she was accepted as part of the landscape and noticed no more, I do not know, but my next pictured recollection of her seems to be of an attractive maiden, not 'out' in any fashionable sense, but almost 'out' in the flower-sense, and decidedly noted by masculine botanists.

Her early romances were matters of intense interest to the 'Small Sister,' who, nourished on fairy-tales, saw in every new caller a probable Prince Charming. It is difficult, now, to see how this young person could have reconciled her behavior on some of those summer evenings to any ideals of propriety she may have cherished, but it is undoubtedly true that she flattened herself behind the front door on one occasion and saw a youthful admirer make his fond farewells and kiss the hand of the future author.

No episode of a similar nature in the 'Small Sister's' later life has ever given her such a thrill; it was as if the moonlight, the fair-haired girl in the doorway, the dark boyish head bent over the white hand — as if all these beat, at once, upon the door of romance and flung it wide.

CHAPTER III

'THE PATHFINDER'

FOR the last few years of our New England girlhood my sister and I were frequently separated, for her rather desultory education was under way at Gorham Seminary, Maine; at Wakefield High School, Massachusetts; at Morison Academy, Baltimore, Maryland; and finally, at Abbott Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, where we left her when our stepfather's failing health rendered a removal to California necessary.

The arrival of our family quartette at Santa Barbara, landing at the long wharf from the little San Francisco steamboat, is always connected in my memory with the odor of wet violets, for it was raining on that soft winter morning and flowers were everywhere. Marcel Proust says somewhere: 'When nothing remains of the past — after the removal of all living beings connected with it — still, frail, and immaterial as they are, smell and taste remain faithful and persistent, to recall, to suggest, to bear without flinching, on their almost impalpable substance, the incalculable weight of memory.'

Wet violets, the heavy odor of the datura in

the gardens we passed, the sound of a guitar in the evening stillness — these bear those departed days upon their shoulders and mean Santa Barbara to me now, as much as spreading live-oaks, Spanish moss, the bells of the Mission, and the incredible green of the winter foothills.

In her Autobiography my sister bears ample testimony to the romantic charm of the lovely town of long-ago, and the town must have responded, for only yesterday the letter of an old friend describes how 'Kate burst upon placid Santa Barbara with her dazzling smiles and her immaculate gowns,' and how 'every one fell captive to her wonderful, radiant personality.'

The phrase, 'immaculate gowns,' suggests a certain splendor, and that quality I am sure my sister's simple frocks, made by my mother's hands, could hardly have possessed, but as to the word 'radiant,' applied to her personality, it must be an appropriate one, for in the innumerable letters of condolence, received by her husband and by me in the weary months since she left us, 'radiant' is so almost invariably to be found, that we confidently expect it, when unfolding the various tributes of affection and admiration.

'Radiant,' too, may well describe those early California days for both sisters, even if it be

K. D. W. AT SEVENTEEN

considered too brilliant a one for the elder of the two, but the radiance seems to me in retrospect to have been that of a Saint Martin's Summer, a calm and balmy period of weather in which one may gather strength for coming storms.

These duly arrived, and the first one may fitly be described as 'the gigantic storm of the Equinox,' for we found ourselves, at my stepfather's death after a long illness, not only 'mortgaged,' a condition which Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm so deplored for her own family, but in tangles of debt, with no assets and no wage-earners.

My admired and brilliant stepfather, an unusually fine physician and an accomplished gentleman, does not seem to have shone as a land-buyer and business promoter, and my mother had unfortunately invested her small fortune, under his advice, in Santa Barbara real estate, which had now fallen to a point where its value could hardly be distinguished by the naked eye.

Our dear maternal parent had no business experience whatever, my brother was still only a little boy; I, a slip of a school-girl, and Kate not much more than that; but 'the Pathfinder,' as we frequently called our eldest hope, found a way out for all of us. She was never of those who calmly lie down and let circum-

stances walk over them; it was rather the other way about, and the circumstances trembled before a superior spirit and prostrated themselves in her path, where they belonged.

She learned, through Mrs. Caroline Severance, of Los Angeles, of a Kindergarten Training School soon to be established in that town and was encouraged to believe that she could make a success as a kindergartner. We had never up to that time, as I remember, heard, either of Froebel or of his system of child-education, but the two words were destined to become part of life before long, and they proved magic ones, indeed, for they opened to both of us the doors of opportunity and of success, and still better, the portals of that enchanted country of childhood, which is the morning-land of the soul.

There were practical difficulties, of course, connected with sending our eldest to Los Angeles for a year's study of the kindergarten, but dear Mrs. Severance (blessed be her memory!) removed the first by offering a home to the Pathfinder, and we provided the money for tuition, clothing, and travel by hastily mortgaging the only bit of property left unmortgaged.

There followed for Kate a delightful year of study and practice in a calling which she found to be as native to her as the water to a swan

and another twelve months in which she practised this calling in Santa Barbara.

As by this time I had graduated, with three of my friends, at the Santa Barbara College, an impermanent institution which never before had conferred similar honors (and never did again!), I was able to begin my pedagogic career by helping my sister in her little private kindergarten, thus learning something of its practical workings. I served my apprenticeship there, also, at teaching children to read English, a task with which I then felt, and still feel, the labors of Sisyphus cannot be compared.

Our untiring and deft-fingered mother worked wonders of housekeeping and dressmaking during those two difficult years, and Kate and I did our inexperienced best at private teaching out of kindergarten hours, but all our efforts, combined with renting our comfortable house and retiring to a small cottage on a back street, scarcely furnished the bread and butter for the family, much less dried away the seas of debt in which we were drowning.

The S.O.S. call for ships in distress had not yet been formulated, but we were all unconsciously sending it out hour by hour, and by and by it was answered, not in the least as we had expected and not altogether to our liking, for it meant a divided family. Still relief did

come and, as it turned out, to the ultimate advantage of all of us.

My sister has described in her 'Garden of Memory' the now historic educational experiment initiated in San Francisco by Dr. Felix Adler, of New York, and the establishment of the famous Silver Street Kindergartens under her direction. In 'Pioneers of the Kindergarten,' a valuable little book lately published by Charles Scribner's Sons, a complete account is given of the beginnings of the Froebelian movement in the various cities of the United States and full credit is there bestowed upon the then Kate Douglas Smith and her work in the city by the Golden Gate. She, herself, with her usual modesty, attributed the fact that she was called upon to organize 'the first free kindergarten west of the Rocky Mountains' to the very small supply then on hand of trained kindergartners, but, whatever may have been the reason for the selection, it was amply justified by its success.

Both these historic beginnings and their earlier results were known to me only by letters, newspapers, and magazine articles, for my call of distress had been answered by a relief ship from Mexico, which bore me away to the little town of Magdalena in the State of Sonora, there to conduct in the Spanish language a private school which its founders de-

signed, eventually, to regenerate the entire Mexican Republic. On the third of December, 1878, the only date save that of the Landing of Columbus which I have ever thoroughly assimilated, I arrived in Magdalena; and as during the years since that momentous day Mexico has not seemed to the outside world to have become wholly regenerated, it would not appear that my youthful efforts were adequate to the task.

However that may have been, every day of experience in the beautiful little far-away town and with the bewitching, affectionate, passionate, impulsive Mexican children was of value to me,[1] and no less so were the two following years in the Public Schools of Tucson, Arizona.

Those three years covered many hardships for us all, and the home letters I received during that period show not only the sorrow of separation, but the daily and hourly struggle to strengthen the doors against that voracious wolf whose howls had been persistently heard ever since my father's death. My mother's letters dwell proudly on Kate's success and her growing fame, on the extraordinary number of people, many of them really great personages, who visit her kindergarten, on the in-

[1] In her story for girls, *Under the Cactus Flag*, Miss Smith has incorporated many of her experiences in Mexico and Arizona.

vitations she has to lecture before educational societies, on the requests of Normal School Principals that their students may come and see the workings of 'the Gospel according to Froebel'; but there is a constant undercurrent of anxiety which runs between the lines. My brother had by this time been obliged to leave school and make a beginning on his business career, but all our earnings together were scarcely enough for daily living, much less for debt-paying. If my sister and I had been struggling musicians or painters, no doubt many a helping hand would have been held out to us, but, alas! we were nothing so picturesque or romantic, so we struggled along as best we could, and somehow, by incredible exertion and self-sacrifice, those abominable debts were eventually paid, those execrable mortgages satisfied, every shred of property sacrificed, and the family ship, thus lightened, sailed along her appointed course more smoothly.

My sister's letters during those years were alternately steeped in gloom because of the complete exhaustion that followed each week of her brilliant educational success, or gay with jests over the wounds of poverty. Those were the days when she was still young enough to sign herself 'Katharine,' for there seems to come a period in every girl's life when she balks at the name bestowed upon her by her 'spon-

sors in baptism.' She may not object to having been made 'a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,' but she criticises the name on her passport.

'Katharine,' then, recounts the success of the closing exercises of her first school year, which seem to have been followed by a meeting of persons interested in the kindergarten cause. She writes:

> There was a great crowd and the children were lovely beyond words. The Assistants from the Normal School sang a hymn which I wrote to a melody of Abt's, and I made a closing address on the kindergarten, in which I am sure I made some points for the cause, although [she might well have said, in spite of!] I was obliged to cut out *eleven* pages of it, owing to the lateness of the hour. My costume for the occasion was my old blue flannel, with wide white collar and cuffs, my old small white bonnet, with newly washed mull trimming and strings and a pair of nicely dyed black gloves. Effect, educational, simple and pleasing. I will send you a printed account of the affair, but must post this first one to Dr. Adler in New York.

In a later letter in which she tells me that she has been invited by the City Superintendent of Schools to lecture before his teachers and that the Executive Committee of the State Teachers' Association has also asked for an address, she outlines another fashionable toilette for a theatre party to which she had been invited.

You ask me how I like F. C. I can hardly say, though of course I like him better since he took me to the theatre. S. took Annie, and May went with another gentleman, so we were a party of six in one of the lower stage boxes and very elegant indeed!! The girls, of course, were beautifully dressed. I wore Mrs. W.'s fur-trimmed cape and turned my hat hind-side before, thus converting it into a bonnet, to which I affixed new strings, one red and one blue one (!) I added a pair of newly-washed gloves and borrowed a handkerchief, the whole effect being extremely stylish. I think I may say that I created quite a sensation, especially when in bowing to a gentleman who plays the triangle in the orchestra, my bonnet tumbled off into the audience. For a moment all seemed chaos, but definite disturbance was quelled by F. C.'s lightly scaling the box, fishing the bauble up, stepping gracefully on a lady's shoulder and bounding to my side again, amid cheers in the peanut gallery. (This is *not* a fact, I assure you!)

The next day F. C. called and took me all over his aunt's wonderful and nearly completed house, — a tremendous condescension! It is as good as four art-galleries and a sight to remember forever. He didn't ask me to share it with him, but that may have been due to absent-mindedness!

Good-night, darlingest of darlings, and forgive this hurried scrawl. We say a dozen times a day, 'How can we get along without Nora for a whole year!' KATHARINE

P.S. I am going up to Sadie W.'s to receive on New Year's day. She knows five men, all married, and I know one, also all married. Won't there be wild gayety?

To this period belongs also an account which she wrote me of a luncheon with the President of the Society for Reckless, Retched, Ragged, and Reformed Refugees of Raleigh, North Carolina, and this I give in full, to show the constant gayety that lived in her heart and which neither poverty, ill-health, nor overwork could long subdue.

SAN FRANCISCO, 1107 PINE ST.
December 20th, 1878

Home — Monday evening — good coal fire — raining outside — Mother crocheting a fascinator — Phil reading the 'Pilot.' It is vacation. I have on my white cambric dress and have my hair down. I look cool for December, but still I am not happy. I've been out all the afternoon on errands — went to lunch at the Chamberlain House with Mrs. Blanes (the literary woman whose articles we used to read in the 'Overland'). She is delightful and we had tripe and apple sauce for lunch besides eggs and olives which her daughter brought who is so badly pitted with small pox that it is impossible to look at her without pitying the pitted so to speak, and yet it is a very sad case to be taken in infancy while her Mother was President of the Society for Reckless, Retched, Ragged and Reformed Russian Refugees in Raleigh, North Carolina, and thus an Unscrupulous woman, (one of the receivers of the charity of the Society for Reckless, Retched, Ragged and Reformed Russian Refugees,) who having two small infants very sick with the small-pox omitted to mention the trifle, by which omission the two small infants (not the two small infants above-

mentioned belonging to the Unscrupulous woman, a receiver of the charity of the Society for Reckless, Retched, Ragged and Reformed Russian Refugees), but the two small infants of the *President* of the Society for Reckless, Retched, Ragged and Reformed Russian Refugees of Raleigh, received the contagion whereby one of said small infants never recovered and the other is at present pitted in this pitiable and piteous condition. Isn't it sad? A short but such an affecting story — it quite unmans me.

CHAPTER IV

'GLORIOUS DAYS'

IN a letter of reminiscence which my sister received from that great apostle of the kindergarten, Miss Susan E. Blow, written not long before her death, she says: 'Those were glorious days when we never knew whether the kindergarten would last over night and never doubted that it would last forever.'

In all those 'glorious days,' save the ones at the very beginning, I was privileged to share, and as the family slate was now cleared of all financial obligations, and as Kate's marriage to Samuel Bradley Wiggin, a friend of New England days, was now approaching, I returned from my voluntary exile in Mexico.

The first class of the California Kindergarten Training School for Teachers, which my sister had established (1880), was well along with its work when I arrived in San Francisco, but I was privileged to join it at once, on account of my experience as a teacher and my previous knowledge of kindergarten practice.

I had been, more or less, a student at my sister's feet since my nursery days, so I now found not only no difficulty, but the greatest delight, in submitting myself to her instruction.

I was soon able to lift some of the daily work from her shoulders, and when I had obtained my diploma I took charge of the kindergartens, while she devoted herself to her successive training classes of earnest and enthusiastic young women.

Kindergarten work in California was successful from the beginning, as it has been everywhere when the right person has directed its course; but in this case there was not only the interest in the newly discovered, or newly applied educational principles upon which it is founded to awaken interest, not only the compelling charm of the children themselves, but the qualities of the leader. My sister was, it need hardly be said, one of those teachers 'by the grace of God' that Froebel describes. She remarks in her memoirs that she half-believes that Nature intended her, not for a writer, but for an educator, for she could always teach a thing whether she knew it herself or not. This statement is altogether true, and explains, or partly explains, the enthusiasm and devotion of her students who carried the torch she lighted throughout California and its neighboring States.

I should be but a half-hearted believer in Froebel, however, if I did not bear testimony to the fact that the kindergarten is itself a power, and, even in the hands of a much less

gifted person than was Kate Douglas Wiggin, can be trusted to work miracles.

We were all ardent believers in those days, not only in Froebelian principles, but in 'Miss Kate,' as children and teachers uniformly called her and as many of her 'girls' still speak of her. That room at No. 64 Silver Street, where the first free kindergarten of the West was opened, was a hallowed spot to all of us, and for years there hung upon its walls a life-like portrait which bore upon its frame the following words:

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

In this room was born the first free kindergarten west of the Rocky Mountains. Let me have the happiness of looking down upon many successive groups of children sitting in the same seats!

California's tragedy of 1906 levelled the old Silver Street building and destroyed the portrait, but, after all, we kindergartners remembered, in the midst of our sorrow, that the picture was only 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace,' and that the grace was our enduring possession.

Balzac says somewhere: 'The greatest epitaphs are the single names that tell all and make the passer dream,' yet in the historical record of an educational movement there are details that imagination cannot supply, and my sister was so much better known in her later years

as an author than as an educator, that the mention of her name alone, in this connection, would hardly tell the story.

Whether people and things look large or small to you depends, I suppose, upon which end of the opera-glass you use. Sometimes, perhaps, I shall unconsciously use the one end and sometimes the other in looking back upon my sister's life and achievements, or, possibly, you may consider that the glass has never been properly adjusted to my vision and that I see things through a haze. However that may be, the glass is the best one in my possession and I have tried and shall try to use it with judgment and discretion.

The effect of the kindergarten on San Francisco, on California, on the entire Pacific Slope, was almost negligible, undoubtedly, if you consider it as but a ripple in the slow-moving stream of educational progress, but its effect upon my sister and upon me was incalculable. There was a certain statement in a German 'Kindergarten Guide' concerning the possibilities of Froebel's Fifth Gift (twenty-seven one inch cubes, three of which are divided into halves and three into quarters), which was particularly attractive to my glib tongue during my apprenticeship and which I used to chant, most impertinently, to my suffering sister at the family dinner-table.

'The arrangements, rearrangements, and permutations of Froebel's Fifth Gift cannot be counted by hundreds, nor expressed by thousands, but millions hardly suffice to exhaust all possible combinations.'

These were the magic words, and they were sometimes accompanied by a rhythmic dance, in which my brother hastened to join. Take the sentence now, though, out of the realm of applied nonsense, prune away some of its verbosities, and you have a truth which may well be applied to the kindergarten itself and which we demonstrated by experience.

Twenty pages or so in the twelfth chapter of my sister's Autobiography were originally published in pamphlet-form as 'The Girl and the Kingdom,' and given to aid the California Teachers' Club in a campaign to diminish illiteracy in the State. These bear ample testimony to the growth of the author's powers, mental and spiritual, under the influence of Froebel's theories, and to the magic effect of the children upon her and of her personality upon the children. She was admirably fitted for her work both as kindergartner and training teacher — vivacious, magnetic, musical, dramatic, expressive, and, because of these gifts, a natural story-teller.

The widespread success of the kindergarten in California was, of course, not due to her

alone, but to the devoted labors of many believers, the most prominent of whom was the late Mrs. Sarah B. Cooper, whose life after she became converted to Froebel, was entirely given up to the cause.

The immediate success of the movement, however, must be credited to my sister, to her effect upon her students, upon the throngs of visitors to Silver Street, upon the audiences that attended her many educational lectures and addresses, and upon those, far and near, who read her graphic, original, and witty printed 'Reports' of her work.

Anna Catharine Markham, wife of California's poet, writes to me that she well remembers when Kate, 'in the first glow of the "Patsy" book, visited the San José Normal School and addressed its students — a radiant creature, as if poised on tiptoe for a flight.'

Tributes of this nature in regard to the magnetic effect of K. D. W.'s educational addresses have poured in upon me ever since I began upon this simple record, and one just received from a San Francisco teacher most amusingly illustrates the point. It seems that on one occasion a public meeting was held to discuss the value of the free kindergarten to the community, and it was advertised that Miss Kate Douglas Smith would take the affirmative side of the question, Professor John Swett,

Principal of San Francisco's High School, assuming the negative.

The evening came, and my sister made her address, so convincing in its arguments, so glowing with enthusiasm, so magnetic in its outpouring, that the room, though crowded with tired teachers and staid taxpayers, shook with waves of applause. When these had died away, Professor Swett was called upon in rebuttal, but he only shook his grey head, held tight to the arms of his chair, and answered with his familiar little chuckle, 'No; I'm well enough off where I am. I've got a wife and family and I've no right to expose myself to certain destruction!'

Records of these days and of our teaching days together, my sister's and mine, show us as collaborators very early in our experience. I often wrote the words of songs and games, for instance, to which Kate composed or adapted melodies, a number of which may be found in our book known as 'Kindergarten Chimes.' [1] This volume may almost be considered a 'hoary landmark' in these times and so may 'The Story Hour,' [2] a collection of our tales for little people, 'Children's Rights,' [3] a volume of educational essays, and finally 'The Republic of Childhood.' [4] This work in three volumes,

[1] Oliver Ditson Company.
[2] Houghton Mifflin Company. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

I, 'Froebel's Gifts'; II, 'Froebel's Occupations'; III, 'Kindergarten Principles and Practice,' was the fruit of our lectures and addresses to the four hundred graduates of the California Kindergarten Training School between 1880 and 1893, and, I trust, 'led many unto righteousness' in its day. (Accidents attending a 'haughty spirit' are well known, but I must mention here that the last-named book has been translated into Spanish, Japanese, and Marathi, and 'The Story Hour,' into Russian.)

Roman history demonstrates that consulships rarely lead to an undying friendship of the twin incumbents, but the affection for each other of these two sisters remained quite untouched by the writing and editing of the six educational tomes to which I have referred. There came a period in later life, however, when we had left California and were spending our summers at 'Quillcote,'[1] when discord arrived and tragedy impended. We were then arranging and compiling the eight volumes of 'The Children's Crimson Classics'[2] ('Pinafore Palace,' 'The Posy Ring,' 'Golden Numbers' — all poetry; 'The Fairy Ring,' 'Magic Casements,' 'Tales of Laughter,' 'Tales of Wonder' — all fairy-stories; 'The Talking Beasts,' —

[1] Dove-cote, the home of the dove; Quillcote, the home of the pen. Why not? That is what we thought when we christened it together one day on the blueberry plains.

[2] Doubleday, Page & Co.

fables), a labor of love which we have always regarded as one of our real achievements. These volumes represented not only the immediate reading for the particular book in question, but the years of experience in teaching and story-telling accumulated by both editors, and it was a particular source of pride to us that we employed no proxies to read for us, 'farmed-out' no work whatever, but selected and prepared every word in the series and corrected all proof-sheets.

Whether the task exhausted us more than had been the case with our former work, or the New England climate proved less soothing than that of California, I cannot say, but we violently disagreed over many of the selections, and finally were obliged to settle our difficulties by a complicated system of exchange and barter, the elder sister, perhaps, offering to give up such and such a poem or story, if the younger would loose her 'strangle-hold' on some other selection. The relative who assisted Edmund Clarence Stedman in compiling his Anthologies of American and British verse once told me that although she had, up to the time of beginning that work, regarded Mr. Stedman with respect and affection, she felt, after its completion, that she could not even breathe the same air with him and promptly removed herself to another part of the country. Matters

did not go quite so far with us, but I remember that our highest levels of exasperation were always reached in our arguments upon the values of certain poems, so it is probable that poetic differences are less easily composed than prosaic ones.

This long and close association with children and teachers of children, this daily life with 'the one supreme majority,' as William Canton calls them, naturally directed the coming author's thoughts into child-paths and were no doubt responsible for her first two books, 'The Story of Patsy' and 'The Birds' Christmas Carol.'

Her interest in the kindergarten never wavered until the end of her life, although she gave up teaching on her first marriage in 1881 and subsequently the training of teachers when she removed with her husband to New York in 1884. In the midst of her literary work, however, she continued to give addresses on the truth as it is in Froebel, she helped to organize and became a permanent officer of the New York Kindergarten Association, and when her honors fell thick upon her she still remembered the needs of the children and answered all requests for autographs with the following little card:

It is with much pleasure that Mrs. George C. Riggs (Kate Douglas Wiggin) encloses her autograph. She is glad to respond to the request of an appreciative reader, and she belives that you, in

your turn, will be equally glad to return an equivalent. She therefore asks you to send her twenty-five cents for the New York Kindergarten Association, of which she is Vice-President.

I will add, as a postscript to this brief history of kindergarten work in the West, the testimony given by my sister at an educational meeting in the last year of her life, which proves that for 'new heavens' she had never 'spurned the old.'

THE KINDERGARTEN, OLD AND NEW

The kindergarten has passed through many critical stages in my time. At first it was flattered and even spoiled a little perhaps. We, the very first kindergartners, may have gone about looking as if we had found the Holy Grail (and as a matter of fact, some of us had!), but speedily we were relieved of any unnecessary vanity and since that time we have been accused by School Boards of doing nothing, and by psychologists of doing too much; — first of paralysing the faculties and then of over-stimulating them! We have been nagged into all sorts of adaptations to make ourselves serviceable to the higher grades. We have been cut and trimmed, chastised and scolded; told first that we were too metaphysical, next that we were quite lacking in any philosophical basis, and always that we were sentimental! That has been often true, and so at times were all the other criticisms, only I should like to say that after all a sentimental woman is no worse in dealing with young children, than the woman with the iron jaw, and thin lips; a woman who is so full of methods that they exude from every pore, one who is so crammed with systems

and theories that some of the loveliest things, hers by right of sex, have been crowded out — instinctive, comfortable motherliness, imagination, genial common-sense, humor, and poetry, and all the little loves that have wings and add grace and charm and sweetness to life, and to education as well; — which *ought* to be life and never quite *is*. I am making no plea for hit-or-miss irresponsibility, — only for that wisely assimilated knowledge which, in a teacher, will make children bud, like Aaron's rod, not blight and wither them at the root.

I wonder is it, can it be, an inherent weakness in Froebel's plan of education that it is only completely successful in the hands of a certain kind of woman? I am not going to claim that it is the highest type — not at all — but simply that it *is* a type. It takes a certain versatility, a light touch, a flexible strength, a playful spirit, some vision, some instinct, some optimism, and many other things not so rare, that ought to be acquired by grown-ups who live day by day, with those whose bright faith age has not yet tarnished.

It is the boy not the man,

> 'Who by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended.'

The traditions of the kindergarten are simple, touching and beautiful to me! To my fancy, the dear old Froebel, like some Pied Piper, played so tender and enchanting a tune that all the children followed him gladly. It is such influences that keep on leavening our work-a-day world, if only those who take up the pipe of Froebel will play upon it with like simplicity and sincerity.

K. D. W.

CHAPTER V

THE GIFT OF TONGUES

WE are, on my father's side, at least, a family with an urge for expression, a family which my reserved mother often characterized as having the 'gift of tongues.' This description, though not intended to be at all flattering and meant to hold a covert allusion to her daughters' powers of exaggeration, is more or less true, and describes, I fear, nearly all the descendants of that old Captain Noah Smith, of South Reading, Massachusetts, who is spoken of in the Town Chronicles as having 'in profusion (!) the qualities of language and memory.'

I can only say, in our defence, that if we have the gift my mother rather scornfully described, we generally have something to say, and persons have been known to exist in other families who had the one endowment without the other.

If we begin no farther back than old Captain Noah, however, whose profusion of language may sometimes have bored his fellow-townsmen, we pass at once to our paternal grandfather, who, as a Deacon of the Baptist Church,

a member of the Maine Legislature, one of the Speakers of its House and one of its Secretaries of State, must have had considerable use for linguistic powers in his day. As he was afterward Secretary of the United States Senate and Legislative Clerk of the same body, it would appear that he used these powers neither unwisely nor too well. One of his sons became a distinguished and eloquent preacher, one (my father) a lawyer of promise and a brilliant and magnetic speaker, while the three remaining sons were noted as story-tellers wherever and in whatever circles they moved. The third generation held two more ordained ministers (both women), two writers, an actor, and three dramatic readers, and the fourth, at the moment, boasts one playwright, one painter, two actor-managers, and a number of editors, lawyers, and public speakers on various questions.

These facts being held up to the public gaze and it being generally conceded that doves tend to produce other doves and dandelions other dandelions, it will be no subject for wonderment that my sister was early attracted to public reading from her own books and that she did so to the delight of others.

She once wrote to me from London in regard to her frequent meetings with the late Henry James:

I never asked him and would allow no one else to ask whether he had ever read one of my books. I should have been very much surprised if he had. He did hear me read one of my stories once, when I did not know he was present. He never called me an author, but 'a dear creature,' which I greatly preferred. He said once, 'You should never do anything but read before an open fire, or by a quiet light. You are a dear creature.'

It has been said by musical critics that few composers are good interpreters of their own compositions, and the same remark, heavily underscored, might be made of most authors and poets. If our own 'dear creature,' then, was, by general consent, a successful interpreter of her own work, it was largely, no doubt, because of much experience with children and young people, from whose reactions she had gained many important points.

I find in her desk a few pencilled notes for an address to the pupils of a certain high school on the matter of reading aloud, which opens as follows:

I think I must give myself the pleasure [she says], of being a little severe on this question, though there may not be a single guilty person in the particular group I am addressing. When you were six and chanting: '*See the cat. The cat is on the mat. The cat will eat the rat*,' your teacher was quite patient with you. There was a frightful mental strain involved in telling the differences between

cat and *mat* and *rat:* differences so slight, yet so important! No wonder the tale did not seem thrilling as it fell painfully and slowly from your infant lips! But I find many of you, at fourteen or fifteen, reading in about the same mechanical and lifeless fashion. Some of the boys read Scott's 'My Native Land,' or Taylor's 'My Fatherland,' as if they were reciting the bill of fare for dinner. Some of the girls take Kingsley's 'Sands o' Dee' — every line of it a picture and every verse of it music — yet they see no pictures and give us none to see, nor any music to hear!

Why does Mary read aloud beautifully and Jane read in such a manner that no one would stay in the room save for politeness' sake? Well, it may be first a question of voice: but what is to prevent Jane's softening her rasping tones, putting in more 'color,' adding something of the needed 'carrying quality.' Or, say it is a question of expression. Why does not Jane study her page of prose or poetry, find out what it means and then try and try again, to *feel* it? If, after long trial, she cannot feel it and make others feel it, Jane must be humbly sorry for herself and endeavor in every way to make herself strong where she is weak, for her lack of imagination and deficiency in power of expression, will handicap her in more things than in reading aloud. This is by no means an unimportant point, this inability to feel, or this inability to express what you feel.

It would be my own opinion that Jane may learn some power of expression if she has anything to express, but, if she has little feeling and imagination, she would best retire at once from public life and betake herself, not to teach-

ing — never to teaching! — not to marriage — the gods forbid! not to cooking — Heaven save us from an unimaginative cook! but to something in the nature of plain typewriting, with no accompanying stenographic arts.

My sister, however, was no 'inexpressive Jane,' but cheerfully agreed when one of her critics remarked that all her stories 'sounded,' when she read them, 'much better than they really were.'

'I dare say that's true,' she immediately retorted — 'If they didn't, why should I read them?' And the remark seemed to leave the critic temporarily deprived of ammunition.

Although Kate appeared, when reading from her books, to do so as simply and blithely as a meadowlark sings, yet the exercise was in reality a very great strain upon her nervous system and often left her with one of those paralyzing headaches which were the burden of her life. For this reason, after her second marriage in 1895 to Mr. George Christopher Riggs, of New York, and her consequent settlement in that city with all the duties upon her shoulders of housekeeper and hostess, as well as author, she gave up these readings save for those covering nearly thirty years in the old Tory Hill Meeting-House at Buxton, Maine, and those which she gave in schools to the very end of her days.

At the readings in the church she always presented, as at least one number on the programme, the result of her summer's work at Quillcote, and so the custom went on, 'Rebecca,' the 'Penelopes,' 'Waitstill Baxter,' 'Rose o' the River,' 'Mother Carey's Chickens,' all being first heard in public by the neighbors, the dwellers in near-by villages, and the visitors from the summer resorts in the vicinity. In the early years of the Author's Readings we and our neighbors attended these functions in hay-carts, fitted with long benches on either side, and as we generally had the vocalists of the evening as return passengers, at least, the journeys were gay ones, and while we strained *up* hills, and held on to one another slipping *down* them, we made the echoes ring with song and laughter. When the motor-car, Czar and Autocrat of the Modern World, made its appearance, the weather-beaten hay-cart was, of course, relegated to the fields, and at all later Readings the Meeting-House Common was a veritable anthill of automobiles — much more expensive vehicles, much less attractive, and immeasurably less festive than the old hay-carts, which, never having been designed for evening excursions, were greatly more attractive on that account.

There follows a summary of these Public Readings at the old Tory Hill Meeting-House,

Buxton, Maine, which will give some idea of the neighborhood activities of my sister's tireless spirit.

The following stories or selections, from the books of Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin, have been read by her in manuscript, or had their first hearing in this church:

1895
'The Village Watch Tower'
'The Midnight Cry'
'The Fore-Room Rug'

1896
'The Nooning Tree'
Chapters from 'Marm Lisa'
'The Little Bishop'

1897
Chapters from 'Penelope's Progress'

(There were no readings in 1898 or 1899)

1900
Chapters from 'Penelope's Irish Experiences'
The Author's Reading at Bixby Centre

1901
Chapters from 'A Cathedral Courtship'
'Timothy's Quest'

1902
Chapters from 'The Diary of a Goose-Girl'
'A Village Stradivarius'

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

1904

Chapters from 'Rose o' the River'
Chapters from 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm'

1905

'Jack o' Lantern'
'Daughters of Zion'

1906

Further Stories from 'New Chronicles of Rebecca'
'Huldah the Prophetess'

1907

'The Old Peabody Pew'

1908

'Susanna and Sue'

1909

Scenes from the 'Rebecca Play' before its first production on the stage

1910

'Mother Carey's Chickens,' before publication
'The Turning Point' before publication

1911

Character sketches: Old Mis' Bascom, Rebecca and Emma Jane, Samanthy Ann, Old Kennebec, Osh' Popham, Lyddy Butterfield

No records are to be found among my sisters papers of the Readings of 1912, 1913, 1914, and 1915, but she continued them with ever-increasing audiences until 1916, when her

church-play, 'The Old Peabody Pew,' was first presented, with a cast of Dorcas Society members.

For the next four years 'The Old Peabody Pew' was regularly given, first for one performance, then for two each season, the last entertainment of the series taking place in 1922 with the play in the afternoon and two new stories read by the author in the evening.

As my sister puts it in her memoirs, her life as an author early began 'to intersect the orbit of youth,' though, in reality, that was the course marked out by fate for her own particular star, and wherever that took her, she moved of necessity in the company of others of the childlike heart.

This reading to children and young people of the grammar and high-school age was an idea which no other writer, as far as I know, has taken up, and, begun as it was through the solicitation of the pupils themselves, was continued with delightful success, not only because much of the material of her books was entirely suitable for the purpose, but because of her gifts as a reader.

From 1908 to 1912 I note from her 'Line-a-Day Books' that this indefatigable person gave sixteen public readings to schools and colleges, these being held in Baltimore (Maryland), Boston (Massachusetts), Denver (Colo-

rado), Charleston (South Carolina), New York and Brooklyn. Journeys to these various points of the compass were not undertaken, of course, with the object of reading to schools, but merely took place as the author happened to be in those cities, often in the course of following the fortunes of one of her plays.

The story of the Irish fortune-teller and what she saw in her crystal ball, when Kate consulted her, has often been told, but as a fortunate example of mind-reading it may bear repeating here.

My sister and her husband were visiting in Ireland one summer when one of Mr. Riggs's cousins suggested that they accompany her to a garden-party at Lord Darnley's. On arrival they found all interest centered in a fortune-teller who seemed to be something of a marvel in her line, and who was astonishing the cosmopolitan group, many of them strangers, by her wonderful soothsayings.

In time, so an onlooker tells me, some one pushed Mrs. Riggs gently toward the bower where the inspired one was holding her mysterious court.

'See what she'll tell us about you,' begged the train that followed. 'She may make you betray your darkest secrets. Come.'

Smiling rather sceptically, my sister's followers awaited the nonsense they expected to

hear from this sombre-eyed prophet of the ball. The woman motioned them back till a little space was thus clear about the newcomer, whose eyes were bright with laughter, as she bent over the implement of fate.

The fortune-teller fixed her gaze upon the crystal, in whose clouded centre moved a film of shifting shadow.

'I see children,' she said. 'You have many children.'

'No,' replied the young woman softly. 'Alas! I have no children.'

'I don't understand,' murmured the seeress, frowning. 'I see them.' Then she grew excited, and her voice rose till the outer fringes of the throng could hear plainly. 'I see them — they are coming — not one or two, but many — many — all laughing — dancing — holding up their hands to you and loving you — so many, many children; they surround you, they cling to you. They are yours — how can it be, all these? And yet you say —' She broke off as if dazed, and shook her head. 'I don't know what it means,' she said stubbornly, 'but it means something. They were there. And they love you and are yours.'

'All the rest of that afternoon,' the host said, in telling the tale later, 'that fortune-teller's eyes travelled, puzzled and watching, after the figure of the young woman who had repudiated

the prophecy. And more than once she said, "It was true! It is true! But what can it mean?"' And he added, 'It has always seemed to me rather a pity that we left her wondering and never told her that she had held the hand and looked into the face of Kate Douglas Wiggin, best-loved of all the people who have written a child's soul out for the dull world to comprehend.'

This tale, told in a flood of Celtic enthusiasm by my friend, holds a certain something that illustrates but can never explain the mysterious attraction that one personality may exert upon others. So, in reality, the children did cling to my sister and her books, so they cling to her still. You may not be able to understand it any more than could the crystal-gazer, but 'they surround her and they are hers.'

The pupils of the various schools which she was to visit often illustrated and decorated wonderful programmes for her; of one of which the following is a specimen:

> The girls of the Washington Irving High School have laughed with 'Rebecca' and have loved her all their lives. It is, therefore, a special joy to them to meet the little girl who rode with Dickens and to recognize in her, 'Rebecca's' lively imagination, gifted pen and warm-hearted generosity.

Some of the schools built bowers for her reception; others sent battalions of seniors to

THE KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN CLUBS OF A NEW YORK SCHOOL

meet her at the railway station; others read to her from her own works; or wrote songs to her and addresses of welcome. A blarney-tongued poet of the Newtown High School presented her at one time with the following verse, accompanied by a wonderful nosegay of flowers:

'In every land where man may go,
Your books have gone before you:
In Ispahan and far Bombay,
In Tokio and Mandalay,
They read and they adore you.'

Clubs, christened in her honor, abound all over the country, the 'Kate Douglas Wiggins,' the 'Polly Olivers,' the 'Rebeccas,' the 'Carol Birds,' the 'Baby Gays,' the 'Penelopes,' the 'Waitstills,' and her study at Quillcote still holds a mammoth box of tributes from the members of these societies, while many of their pictures hang upon its walls.

In recording the various occasions in her 'Line-a-Day Books' my sister shows how deeply these tributes of youthful enthusiasm touched her heart, for she often speaks of them as 'wonderful,' 'inspiring,' 'precious,' and 'unforgettable.'

In the beginning of her literary life the budding author once said: 'To write a book that two successive generations of children might love, read twice, and put under their pillows

at night, oh! what joy of joys, greater than showers of gold or wreaths of laurel.'

The 'two successive generations' have arrived since she wrote those words: the children are still reading of 'Patsy,' 'Carol,' 'Timothy,' 'Lady Gay,' 'Marm Lisa,' 'Emma Jane,' 'Rebecca' and 'Mother Carey's Chickens,' so the yearned-for joy, as well as the wreath of laurel, are deservedly her own.

CHAPTER VI

WAYS OF AN AUTHOR

THE mind is always more interested in processes, I suppose, than in accomplishment. We retain the childish, more properly, perhaps, the human, desire 'to see the wheels go round,' and the supreme fascination in all biography and autobiography is that of finding out, in some degree, at least, how the thing was done, how it was worked out, how the life found its purpose, how it discovered its medium of expression.

No man is born an artist; we can concede that; what the Good and the Wicked Fairies bestow upon us on our christening days are impulses, urges, desires only, in this or that direction. 'Man walks freely in directed paths,' so the Calvinists have always maintained, and though many would-be believers, young and old, have puzzled their heads over this 'hard saying,' it really means only that the machine once started, it is henceforth in the hands of the driver.

It is, and has always been, assumed by critics of the work of Kate Douglas Wiggin that she sang freely, naturally, and simply as a meadow-lark on a bunch of timothy grass. It may be so,

but do the critics remember that 'ease is the lovely result of forgotten toil'? Have the critics ever been present during the morning practice-hour of a meadowlark? Have they noticed that, although song is the bird's natural method of expression, he obliges himself to perform his trills and melodies over and over until his voice is honey-sweet, his vocalization perfect?

Early in my sister's life in New York, when she was reading to a fashionable audience in aid of a free kindergarten, an elegant patroness approached her at the end of the evening and exclaimed enthusiastically:

'You are really quite versatile, dear Mrs. Wiggin! I know you play and sing; I have heard you read, and now they tell me that you write these little things, yourself!'

Oh, exquisitely turned, double-edged, and barbed compliment! How one would long at such a time to invest it with something of a boomerang quality and let it recoil upon itself!

In a compartment of my sister's desk I found, carefully preserved, the following words of Booth Tarkington's:

> We are here — we writers — to discover and reveal things about life — and we seek the finest means of doing so — the most vivid means. We must make our words into colors and sounds — and the old tricks and phrases won't do that.

You've got to get living words out of yourself. Nobody else's words: the used word is stale. . . .

'Lord, how that man can write!' ought to be during apprenticeship. I think it's a good intermediate stage, but a damning ultimate. No one ever caught Thomas Hardy or George Meredith or Mark Twain or Shakespeare or Howells at writing!

My sister's books, to give her full justice, were products in one sense of indefatigable industry, if they were, on the other hand, those of a natural gift of song. I have never known any one who had such 'an infinite capacity for taking pains,' were it for costumes, table-furniture, house-decoration, festival-making, or writing. She would experiment with colors, move furniture, rehang pictures, rewrite chapters of her stories, until overcome by the protestations of her family. '"Let well enough alone"?' she would cry when I urged her not to toil any more over some passage in her books that did not altogether suit her. '"Let well enough alone?" There isn't any such thing as "well enough!" It must either be done to the very limit of one's capacity, or it must not be done at all.' To use Browning's phrase, there was but 'one way possible of speaking truth, to mouths like hers, at least.'

As to the mechanical side of her work she commonly wrote in pencil on large yellow blocks of unruled paper, often out of doors in

the summer, often in bed, propped up by pillows, in winter, and, of course, long hours at her desk. Almost invariably she rewrote the pencilled draught in ink before sending it to be typed, making many changes in the copy as she did so, for she felt that seeing the thought in a different color and in a different medium gave a new light upon the words that clothed it. I possess several finished manuscripts of her stories which are as exquisitely written as if for exhibition, and among these the complete copy of 'Love by Express,'[1] her first novelette, never published under her own name.

She often read the first draughts of her story aloud to her husband — whom she considered an admirable critic, with stern literary standards, and in summer would gather the neighbors in Quillcote Barn, in order to observe their reactions. We always consulted together over the pencilled copy, the inked copy, the typed copy, the galley and page proofs, and, in those halcyon days when these existed, the plate proofs, also.

These sisterly compliments she, of course, returned, though she always maintained that I found much more fault with her manuscripts than she ever ventured to do with mine.

[1] Now privately printed for charitable purposes by the Dorcas Society of Hollis and Buxton, Maine, of which she was Honorary President.

Her notebooks were many, all carefully arranged and made over occasionally, as the ideas, suggestions, and quotations were used, or felt to be no longer of value. They travelled with her from New York to Maine every summer and from Maine to New York every winter, in a set of medium-sized tin boxes which we bought in Scotland from time to time and which 'Jane Grieve,' the aged servant in 'Penelope's Progress,' is described as using for her luggage. In a bookcase beside me as I write, is a set of these volumes:

Quotations on Love — 1 Vol.
Quotations on Marriage — 1 Vol.
Children's Sayings — 2 Vols.
Notes for Love-Stories — 1 Vol.
Notes: International and Foreign — 1 Vol.
Notes on New England — 2 Vols.
Miscellaneous Notes — 2 Vols.
Notes for Children's Stories — 2 Vols.
Title and Suggestion Book — 1 Vol.

I give a sample page of this last, as showing the working ways of at least one author:

The Wellingtons of Wellington

Wellington might be Christian name, after the Duke.

An Unconsidered Trifle

Claudia was only the snapper-up of Ethel's unconsidered trifles.

Her Lot

'Thy lot or portion in life is seeking after thee; therefore be at rest from seeking after it.' The Caliph Ali; one of Mohammed's successors.

Nancy's Brook

See 'Ridlon,' Page 10.
Connect with 'Pliny's Pond.'

The Granary

House or room where two Grannies slept.

Betty of Broadway

'Bubbling Betty'

The Little City

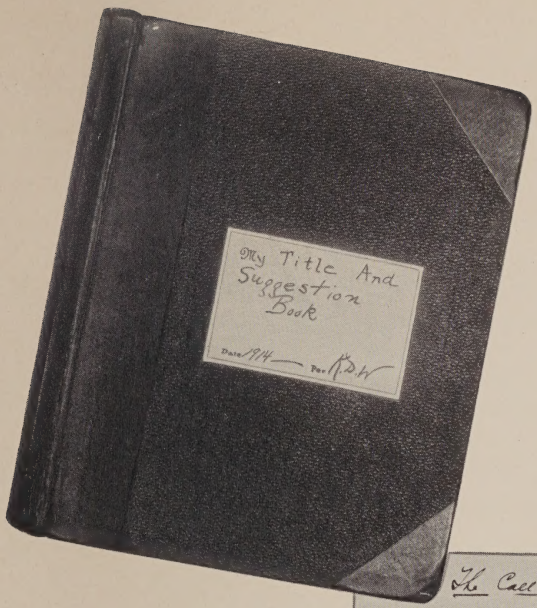
'There was once a little city and few men within it and there came a great king against it and besieged it.'

Another page here reproduced as she wrote it, would open a 'Door of Hope' to many story-tellers, I believe, if they could peep through and see what was on the other side of the title.

The Call of the Child

The Door of Hope Hosea

'And I will give her the Valley of Achor for a door of hope' — Page 290 Green's Shakerism. Lev. V. 5. Ezra: 10, 11.



The Call of the Child 12

The Door of Hope Hope.

"And I will give her the Valley of Achor for a door of hope." Esp 290 Poems Shakespeare Lev. v. 5 Ezra 10. 11.

Street o' the Year

Mem. 1st Chp. Shadow of Life. Sedgwick "The book of life begins with a man & a woman in a garden."

The Swinging Seats
The Cæsars Left

"And Jubal was the father of all such as handle the harp or the organ."

Homing Pigeons
A Tale of Reforestation MSS
Plays of Columbus"

Development & discovering Herself or Himself.
"On our backs a new perfection treads
A power more strong in Beauty born of us
And fated to excel us as we pass
In glory that old Darkness"

THE TITLE AND SUGGESTION BOOK WITH A SPECIMEN PAGE

Sweet o' the Year

Mem. 1st chap. 'Shadow of Life' — Sedgwick. 'The book of life begins with a man and a woman in a garden.'

The Singing Seats

The Organ Loft

'And Jubal was the father of all such as handle the harp or the organ.'

Homing Pigeons

A tale of rejected MSS.

Playing Columbus

Developing & discovering *her*self or *him*self.

'On our heels a new perfection treads
A power more strong in beauty born of us
And fated to excel us as we pass
In glory that old Darkness.'

On the first few pages of this 'Title and Suggestion Book' are lists of Christian names for heroes and heroines; first, those that appeal to her as musical; second those capable of piquant nicknames; as, Psyche (Encyclopædia), 'Flip' (Philomena), 'Bob' (Roberta), etc.

Then follow several pages of strong, outstanding New England names — Reliance, Abigail, Tabitha, Permelia, Didymus, Increase, Adoniram, Peletiah.

Names for houses and places come next; as, 'The Robins' Nest,' 'Eve's Acre,' 'Windy Cot,'

and 'Nonesuch'; and in a corner of the page is set a complete set of names for the characters in what would have been, we feel sure, a fascinating fairy-tale:

Willow-Wand —
Garden-Bloom —
Dawn o' Day —
Tree o' Pearl —
and
Sweet-Meat.

'Suggestions for Inscriptions and Forewords,' in which my sister was particularly happy, are to be found in this volume, and pages of 'Titles,' to each of which the writer has attached the significant phrase, 'No story yet!' For the encouragement of youthful writers, however, it should be added that other pages bear the legend, 'Titles with considerable detail to begin on!'

'Character Suggestions' follow in multitude, all on bits of paper tucked into the various pockets at the end of the book, and this is only one of twenty volumes that give some idea of my sister's unceasing industry and passionate interest in her work, an interest that flowed deep below all others and was the master-current of her life.

She left behind her more than thirty educational addresses, in complete form, but never published, twenty essays on literary topics,

never printed, and a host of curtain speeches, and talks on the drama, sufficient to fill a volume in themselves.

There are also, in finished form, a monologue, 'Beside the Cradle,' freely adapted from the French of Ernest Legouvé, which she often used most successfully in amateur theatricals, but never published, and a scholarly essay, 'The Music of the Century,' which she wrote for the Wednesday Afternoon Club of New York and on which she lavished unlimited study and research.

UNFINISHED SKETCHES

These are six in number, the one which is most nearly completed being a novelette, 'Comin' thro' Rye,' which was written in collaboration with our dearly beloved sister-authors, Mary and Jane Findlater. Six chapters of this story were finished, but the two writers who remained had no heart to go on with the work after my sister had left them, although a sketch of the concluding chapters had been outlined.

There is also a brief War-Play, 'Her Service Star,' which a sudden illness of the author halted in mid-career; a Scottish tale, 'Daft Davy'; fragments and sketches for a girl's story, 'Bubbling Betty'; scenes and many witty speeches for an unnamed comedy for

four characters; and finally, 'Cupid and the Choir,' a musical play for churches, in the line of 'The Old Peabody Pew.'

This was so far completed that Mr. A. L. T. Cummings, of Portland, Maine, the original 'Justin' of 'The Peabody Pew,' had been called in to discuss the various plans for its production, to hear some of its amusing scenes, and to offer any criticisms that might occur to him. It would have been, I think, a delightful vehicle for amateur acting, for the jealousies and rivalries of the singers who are preparing for an 'Old Folks Concert,' aided by 'professional talent,' offer admirable material for satire and the soprano heroine and her tenor lover are simple and beautiful New England types.

CHAPTER VII

THE 'CALLING' OF THE AUTHOR

THERE was published some twenty years ago in 'The Lamp,' a periodical now extinguished, an interview with Kate Douglas Wiggin, which shows better than any words of mine could do her ideas as to the calling and election of the author. The reporter who was commissioned to obtain the interview first sent my sister, as I remember, a series of questions which he desired to ask her, and she, in return, wrote out for him a complete article. This was never incorporated in any of her books, and as 'The Lamp' is no longer to be had, it would seem appropriate to introduce the subject-matter of the paper here, for you can hardly find a better authority on a literary method than the author who has devised it for himself.

The opening of the interview runs as follows:

> I have just been reading, said Mrs. Wiggin, an article on 'The Plague of Novels' in the 'Atlantic Monthly,' and it has led me to the determination, little as I write now, to write still less in the future. Of course, this is not what the author of the article would prefer; she would wish me to stop altogether, but that is beyond my power.

Then the call, said the interviewer, has not been silenced by this protest?

I do not believe, reflected Mrs. Wiggin, that an intense desire to write is of necessity proof that one is 'called.' For aught I know it may be a weakness, or a habit, like the desire for stimulants. But whatever it may be, it possesses me.

Interviewer. But is not that desire the very cause of the Plague? How is the writer to decide whether his taste is a talent or no, except by writing, and by trying again when he fails? And moreover, necessity knows no law. Some write who have neither taste nor talent — who may have lost both — for the sake of daily bread.

K. D. W. I'm sure I do not know how we can decide whether we are merely adding to the Plague, or whether we have a vocation. We may have to wait for the verdict of posterity. Future appreciation is sometimes balanced by contemporary neglect. But a man's plea that he has to earn his living is barred out, because man need not live by art alone. It is no argument that he may be keeping his mother from the workhouse and his wife from the washtub. Ethically speaking, that would be, if not quite a valid excuse, at least a handsome apology, but æsthetically, it is valueless.

Interviewer. But, after all, literature is a legitimate method of earning one's living, as well as an art. Even the writers of talent have to keep the pot boiling, and cannot afford to wait for the hour of inspiration, if it be tardy in coming. They, too, are confronted by a condition, whatever may be the theory of true art.

K. D. W. The question will probably never be settled, though I believe that, on the whole, talent

will produce qualitatively superior, if quantitatively less, work when not pressed by the material needs of life. It seems to me that posterity always rejects the artist's pot-boilers, and treasures his real achievements. But observe that somewhere in his pot-boiler the man of talent will find himself again, if only for a single chapter; that somewhere in his book he will prove his innate superiority over the writer who has no talent to start with; this apart from the fact that his technique will surely be better.

Interviewer. Is not this the difference between the artist and the artisan? But the question still remains whether the one is necessarily more sincere in his desire to write than the other. Is it not rather a question of the measure of talent, of the gift of taking pains? Is not the aspiration the same in essence, differing only in degree?

K. D. W. To the writers themselves, yes; but by their fruits ye shall know them. Sincerity, enthusiasm, without executive power, are wasted. He who has these without the other is but half-armed, and, I think, much to be pitied.

Interviewer. Granting the power of expression, sincerity, and enthusiasm are the qualities you place first, Mrs. Wiggin, in the creation of artistic work?

K. D. W. Yes, the author's chief responsibility is to be true to the inward voice; to write from the level of his own mind, in his own way, without affectation or pose. Sincerity in choice of subject, in manner and style, has something of the same effect between author and reader as it has between man and man. You may not admire an author, or have a great opinion of his art, but if he has chosen

his theme with modesty, and has worked with sincerity, you cannot wholly despise him.

Interviewer. And enthusiasm?

K. D. W. That I place next in importance to sincerity. I do not mean sprightliness, or vivacity of style. I mean genuine love of the piece of work one is doing. My own theme is usually so slight that it can hardly be discerned with the naked eye, but it is always big enough for me to love.

Interviewer. Is it not the purpose, rather than the theme, of your stories, that you love.

K. D. W. I am not aware of having a purpose when I write a story.

Interviewer. Surely you aim to add to the sum of human happiness, to foster optimism, to show the bright side of life?

K. D. W. No, I cannot say that I deliberately set to work to preach any gospel, whether of optimism or anything else. I have no set purpose in writing. I merely chronicle what pleases me and interests me, in the best way of which I am capable. If I add to the sum of human happiness, if I bring in a little of sunshine and brightness by the way, so much the better, but the story and the characters are the things with me.

. . . . . .

Interviewer. Does easy reading mean hard work in the case of your books?

K. D. W. Writing certainly means conscientious, unsparing work with me. I keep on correcting, changing, improving till the last moment, until, indeed, the irrevocably last proofs reach me from the publishers. I remodelled the 'Penelopes' almost entirely while they were appearing serially in

the 'Atlantic Monthly,' and 'Rebecca' was rewritten two or three times.'

Interviewer. People seem to be much concerned to-day over the future of American fiction. Have you formulated any opinions on this subject?

K. D. W. Not for publication. I read chiefly for pleasure — well, to tell the truth, entirely for my own satisfaction, without ulterior motives such as your question implies. I read a little of everything good, save humorous books and historical novels, and even one of these, 'The Cloister and the Hearth,' is among my favorites. Scott and Dumas I admire and respect, but cannot read. For novelists I like best Jane Austen, George Eliot, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, Tolstoy, and Hawthorne. The thousand delicate lights and shades of character, the subtle suggestions and intimations in Jane Austen and others of her school, entrance me more than clash of steel, flow of blood, or hairbreadth 'scapes by sea and land.

Interviewer. You place realism above romanticism, then; character drawing above plot and action?

K. D. W. Decidedly. Realism has won the day with me. In fact, there never was any struggle over the schools so far as I am concerned. My allegiance was pledged from the very first.

Interviewer. Realism apparently has emerged victorious after the romantic craze of a few years ago, but it seems to have another battle before it. After all, it is an old question, that of a greater measure of freedom for the American novelist, the appeal from realism to naturalism.

K. D. W. Oh, yes, the protest against '*bourgeois* fiction.' Well, put me down as a counter-protestant in the matter.

Interviewer. Without reservation — on social, moral, and æsthetic grounds?

K. D. W. And on the grounds of good taste, and verity. Realistic fiction, it seems to me, has for its aim and end the faithful reflection of current life; it is a sort of 'flexible' contemporary social history. If that history lacks 'temperament,' to use the current euphemism, so much the better, perhaps, for our national morals, provided, of course, that the history be true. So much the worse for our art, say some, but I deny it. The hour when our everyday life justifies the realist in turning naturalist, in writing what are colloquially known as 'strong books,' will be a sorry one for us as a nation. What we gain socially, morally, more than offsets the artistic loss that some deplore, and I fail to see. If the 'anæmic' condition of our fiction be the price we pay for our high standard of morality, by all means let us pay it.

Interviewer. Still, there are episodes even in American life which deserve, really demand, artistic treatment, but which are barred by our literary conventions.

K. D. W. To be sure. If the heart of man be evil as well as good, the great novelist will explore and reveal, and we shall read and suffer and shiver. And when we have closed the book, we shall be a little stronger in our knowledge than we were before in our ignorance. That will be the test, not only of the author's power, but of his sincerity and his right to his subject. But observe that ignorance often has a right to know, a need of knowing, where innocence must be protected because its time for knowledge has not yet come. If we are to have the license of Continental European fiction, let us also

have the measures that protect the young girl there, and, to a certain extent, the young man as well, from the dangers of a literature and a stage that are for mature men and women.

Interviewer. Then you would have a change in our educational ways before we venture upon a naturalistic departure in our novels. But will the Young Person submit?

K. D. W. I would not have any change at all. I do not see the necessity for it. American realistic fiction, I repeat it, reflects the average lives of our men and women very faithfully. Why bother with unpleasant exceptions to our all but universal rule of conduct? If a great master can add to our knowledge and understanding of human frailty and suffering, however, I shall be the last to object.

Interviewer. Still, in the present circumstances, even he, however conscious of his power and the value of his material, might hesitate on account of the Young Person?

K. D. W. Yes, it appears to me to be a case of the redistribution of the burden of responsibility. We all have to do our share in the shaping and preserving of the morality of the nation. In France there is a perfect understanding between authors and the public. They write for men and women; the public sanctions them in their course, and tacitly agrees to keep their books and plays away from the young. Officially, at least, the French, or any other Continental authors, are relieved of all responsibility for the protection of innocence; parents and guardians agree to see to that.

But our educational system is laid down on different and more liberal lines. Parents and guard-

ians exercise but slight supervision over the reading of their children, because what is offered them is, on the whole, morally harmless. That is a tacit convention between the American public, the American author, and the American publisher, and woe to him who breaks the contract. The author has thrust upon him, and accepts cheerfully on the whole, a responsibility that may not properly be his, logically, or æsthetically, but which he readily recognizes as a social duty under our different conditions. And, as I must repeat again, the morally harmless novel most faithfully reflects our everyday life so that art for art's sake does not suffer overmuch. That is the cry of the naturalist, I know, but I hold that naturalism is not art for art's sake, but art for the sake of the knowledge of good and evil — mostly evil. The things that we do not speak about before the young when they happen in real life should not be set before them in books. That's the French theory, and we must adopt it if we desire more 'temperament' — manufactured out of whole cloth — in our fiction.

Interviewer. Then the plea for greater freedom for our novelists is in your eyes based on false premises?

K. D. W. I have no sympathy, no patience with the writers who assert loudest that our literature is menaced and weakened by the presence of this same Young Person. They do not seem to understand that most of the grown men and women in this country are opposed to their brands of naturalism as much for our own sakes as for that of the Young Person. These authors juggle with words, and confuse ideas. Timidity in art is certainly not a virtue, but it is not, after all, the worst of the

vices — not any worse than indecency, when you come to think of it.

I have taken pains, continued Mrs. Wiggin, to study the general temper, the point of view, the ethical standards, and the personal taste of several writers, foreign and native, who deplore the fact that the whole truth of things is so seldom spoken in Anglo-Saxon literature. It seems to me that they do not clearly understand the difference between facts and the truth, between courage and audacity, or brazen effrontery. It is, after all, more a question of *tone* than of theme. No thoughtful human being could be offended by 'Anna Karenina,' or 'The Scarlet Letter.' When genius lifts the curtain one can generally bear the revelation, but when the minor prophets, the 'tuppenny' truth-tellers, take to unveiling the heart of sinful man — Heaven preserve us! None of the cleansing fires appear to have been at work. Where is the love of beauty, the high conviction, the aspiration to make the best of the sorry stuff? All absent! The minor prophet has a 'tarnishing eye,' and he gloats over details.

The artist must write what he knows and what he sees, but before he describes anything that has come under his eye, let him find out what kind of man he is. The eagle sees a great deal; so does the carrion crow. But the crow revels in that over which the eagle, seeing it as plainly, soars with supreme contempt.

Interviewer. Will you tell me, in conclusion, Mrs. Wiggin, if you are at work on a new book?

K. D. W. No; for me, books do not grow in New York. I should never increase 'The Plague of Novels' were it not for the mood that comes from my summer life in a dear New England village. The

ripple of the loveliest river in the world, the smell of the green things growing, the shade of my own elms, the tasselling of my own corn, these are responsible for 'The Goose-Girl,' 'Penelope,' Rebecca,' and the rest.

CHAPTER VIII

BITS OF BLUE SKY

IT is doubtful if many people to-day read George Sand, that most prolific of all women writers, but she said many wise and interesting things, nevertheless, one of which was that for life to be fruitful it must be felt as a joy. 'It is by the bond of joy, not of happiness or pleasure, not of duty or responsibility, that the called and chosen spirits are kept together in this world,' she writes.

Add to this Marcel Proust's maxim of to-day, '*Tâchez de garder toujours un morceau de ciel au-dessus de votre vie*,' and you have a French philosophy of existence, which, though its votaries are far apart in time, proves that their kinship of blood is close.

The Scotsman whom Kate Douglas Wiggin dubbed her Private Poet Laureate,[1] said of her in one of his letters, 'She lived joyfully and joy went with her to the last.' Her nearest and dearest knew this better than any one could tell them, for they had long known that in very truth 'a star danced, and under that she was born.' A friend said one day of one of the

[1] Henry Johnstone of Edinburgh.

characters Kate had created — Rebecca, I think — 'She had the genius of temperament, not the temperament of genius.'

It is an interesting distinction, but whether the one ever exists without some measure of the other, the present writer is not prepared to state. It requires no reflection, however, to pronounce at once the dictum that it is the 'genius of temperament' which is greatly to be preferred if one is choosing a companion, or a housemate, not the 'temperament of genius.'

My sister's 'oldest friend'[1] as the family always called her, says of Kate Douglas Wiggin in a late tribute:

> Kate's resources for fun seemed inexhaustible; she did not wait for numbers, though these were often present, for with only one comrade it was the same. No one has spoken eloquently enough of the constant spring of gayety that bubbled up for her family, for her guests, and often, in early as well as later years, for the entire village. At the age of twelve she wrote to me, 'Come for the Fourth of July. "Fantastics" at six A.M. Party for the town at half-past two. Supper on the lawn at six.' On this particular occasion the rain, at supper-time, sent the company into the house in such numbers that the floor was scarcely adequate to hold them, but the evening ended with story-telling and 'America' and 'Auld Lang Syne' sung with clasped hands in a magic chain of good-fellowship.

[1] Miss Jessie Chase, of New York and Portland, Maine.

There is nothing in this world, and it is to be doubted if there is anything in the next one, more valuable than the ability to manufacture and keep on the premises this 'magic chain.' Of what its links are made, who can state with absolute precision? Personal magnetism is one element in the composition, perhaps; interest in people, just as 'folks,' not as unusual specimens, is another; absence of self-consciousness, which is but another form of egotism, is a third; and the 'merry heart that goes all the way' may be counted as a fourth item. When the compound is boiling vigorously, stir in a liberal measure of real friendliness, and if you cannot make a chain of good-fellowship out of it, when it is cool enough, you are no silversmith, goldsmith, nor blacksmith, either!

To praise, or to characterize impartially, another human creature so near one's self as a beloved and only sister, is next door to impossible, perhaps. If the present writer is accused by the critics of using too brilliant colors in her sketch of Kate Douglas Wiggin, she can only answer that she is painting 'the thing as she sees it, for the God of things as they are.' More no man can do (nor woman either!), but in this particular matter the estimate of another person, quite outside the circle of family relationships, can be added.

Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett says in her

Introduction to the 'Quillcote Edition' of my sister's books:

> The human creature who brings a buoyant soul into the world brings a gift of a value not to be computed in ordinary terms of calculation. It is indeed the gift of being a giver, with full hands and resources inexhaustible — and it is the most wondrous thing in life to be born a 'giver.'

That 'dour and dowie' Scot, Thomas Carlyle was of the opinion that the lives of authors made as depressing reading as the Newgate Calendar, but looking back over my sister's days many of them seem to have been arched with a very fair amount of 'blue sky,' and, on the whole, to furnish rather exhilarating and amusing matter. She was in the habit of preserving programmes of the various entertainments which she organized, or in which she took part, and a number of them lie before me as I write.

I know that the White Queen said that it was a very poor sort of memory that only worked backward, and that the ideal was to remember things *before* they happened.

No Lewis Carroll votary would dare to contradict this saying, but in writing a biographical sketch 'working backward' seems to be almost an essential, and I must use it here, at least, in speaking of past gayeties. The earliest programme I find in which the youthful Kate took

part must have been on the occasion of a visit from California to relatives in Maine, and was rendered during the Centennial Celebrations of 1876. The expression 'took part,' however, can hardly be considered as correct, for although the audience undoubtedly took part, no one else seems to have had a fair chance to do so.

'Miss Katharine D. Smith' modestly opens the programme by singing a duet, 'The Larboard Watch,' with a Mr. Hill. She allows one number to slip by her and then appears again in a tableau, 'The Flower of the Family.' Then follows a solo by an unknown somebody, while 'Katharine' is regaining her breath. This process over, she takes the part of 'Fair Ellen' in a burlesque pantomime of 'Young Lochinvar,' and, still unwearied, she follows the pantomime by joining in a quartette, 'The Bugle Horn.'

A 'Half-Hour's Intermission for Refreshments' succeeds (much needed, no doubt, by the leading lady), and she immediately sings a duet (in costume, too) — with the same Mr. Hill, and you would hardly believe it, but following another musical number, she conducts a Wax-Work Show, appearing herself as 'Mrs. Jarley.'

After all these exploits, she was probably regarded by the audience as one of those Musical Phenomena who now and then appear on our

streets and by some magic means contrive to play two drums, the cornet, the tambourine, and a stand of bells all at one and the same time, . . . but pause, for all is not yet told!

On the last page of the programme appears a 'Centennial Chorus' of five verses, very good ones, too, 'Composed for this occasion by Miss Katharine D. Smith to the air of "Dearest May,"' and the entertainment closes with a 'Medley of National Airs' in which the audience is requested to join.

There is a star after the 'Medley of National Airs,' drawing one's attention to the foot of the page, whereon a note, 'Arranged with original words,' appears. It can hardly be, and yet a dark suspicion will cross the mind at this juncture that 'Katharine' had a finger in this pie, also!

The scene changes, and we are in Santa Barbara in 1878, where 'Katharine' was one of those who performed in a 'Musical and Dramatic Entertainment' at Lobero's Theatre, under the auspices of the 'Union Club.'

The early part of the programme bears no mark of her participation, as her name is not set down, and even with her versatility she can hardly have been fitted to play a trombone solo, or to lead the orchestra in the 'William Tell Galop' or the 'Wrecker's Daughter's Quickstep.' In the play of 'To Parents and Guard-

ians,' however, she appeared as 'Mary Smith,' the little heroine, and very well do I remember the ecstasy of delight in which I gazed upon what was my first very small, very much diluted, but still my first — taste of the spoken drama. This ardent interest in the theatre and things theatrical is a characteristic of our family on both sides of the house, and my mother, when at eighty-eight years she spent her last winter in New York, was always as eager to see a play, no matter what the weather, as were her two daughters.

Later Kate played the *ingénue* part of another 'Mary' in Byron's 'Our Boys,' still in the old adobe theatre of Santa Barbara; followed it with the heroines of Howells's 'Register,' 'Parlor Car,' and 'Sleeping Car,' and in Los Angeles, during the year she was studying kindergarten, achieved a remarkable success in conducting a Mrs. Jarley's Wax-Work Show, which so pleased the audience that it was repeated on three successive nights.

In San Francisco, where, as I have already written, she had been called to organize the first free kindergarten of the Far West (1878), she played for kindergarten benefits the leading rôles in Robertson's 'Caste,' 'Our Boys,' 'Our Girls,' 'The Morning Call,' and 'The Scrap of Paper.' It was in San Francisco, too, that she became a member of the Fortnightly

Club, a coterie of witty and clever people all of whom sang and danced and played and wrote and recited and composed and devised all sorts of extraordinary things for their meetings. It was for the Fortnightly Club that Kate translated and adapted Ernest Legouvé's monologue 'Beside the Cradle,' already mentioned, which she often gave afterward for charitable purposes, and it was there that first appeared her amusing travesty on the smothering scene in 'Othello' in which she converts Desdemona into the assassin and Othello, with his skin 'as smooth as alumental monobaster,' into the innocent victim.

In the final lines of this dramatic work, Othello begs of his fair partner:

Oth. Kill me to-morrow; let me live to-night!

Des. Nay, if you strive —

Oth. (*piteously*). Just half an hour — s'mother day!!

Des. No, if 'twere done, 'twere well 'twere done quickly, Macbeth, Act I, Scene VII!

Oth. But while I say one prayer!

Des. (*looks at her watch*). Time's up! Too late! (*Smothers him with a pillow, he struggling wildly.*)

Emilia (*outside, pounding on door*). My lord, my lord, what ho, my lord!

Des. What noise is this? (*Othello struggles.*) Not dead! Good heavens, how tough! Not dead! I that am cruel, am yet merciful; I would not have thee linger in thy pain — *So, So!* (*Crushes pillow down vigorously and sits on it.*)

Long pause

Ha! no more moving! Still as the grave!
(*Othello moans under the pillow, but relapses into quiet.*)
'Tis done! Othello's occupation's gone!
Thus is my name avenged and one more slander crushed to earth!
Othello's smothered, and yet the foul, mad world
For centuries agone has sworn 'twas I!
I *smothered!!* Ye modern bards, pray tell s'mother tale!
Ye false historians, prepare s'mother version!
Othello's smothered! and 'twas I, a woman, Desdemona,
That did smother him!

Tableau

The 'bits of blue sky' in my sister's life were by no means all dramatic episodes, however, for although her delight in private theatricals and her success in them were so marked that she was more than once urged to make the stage her career, yet she took great pleasure in devising entertainments of another kind and would lavish upon them hours of careful planning, which took account of and provided for every contingency.

In the dramatic episodes I have been chronicling I took no part, for I was not yet supposed to be a young lady in those Santa Barbara days, and my diversions were carried on with my school friends, while my absence in

Mexico and Arizona covered the early San Francisco gayeties. When I returned to the family, however, I also began to disport myself, though, indeed, my sister's devotion and my own to the kindergarten cause, the long hours we lavished on the children, on the students in training school, and on the supervision of our graduates, gave us but little time or strength for other matters.

I remember some essays in dinner-giving that we initiated about that time — 'little dinners of herbs, where love was,' they must have been, for our miniature Chinese servant could never have coped with 'stalled oxen.' To bring out the flavor of the herbs we used a little of that 'Attic salt' which our Massachusetts great-grandfather is supposed to have bequeathed to us, and I fondly hope that there was not more of that commodity than there were 'wittles.'

Some of these banquets we used to call 'Mother Goose Dinners,' and I submit one of our favorite menus.

These were always printed on small sheets of paper, folded once, like programmes, the first page bearing the following legend:

Dinner à la Mother Goose

'Come with a whoop, come with a call;
Come with a good will, or not at all.'

The reverse side the 'Small Sister' always

adorned with a pen-and-ink sketch of a Mother Goose subject, 'Betty Pringle and her Pig,' perhaps, 'Little Nell Etticoat,' or 'Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son,' and then followed the bill of fare, something as follows:

Victuals and Drink

'*There was an old woman and what do you think?*
She lived upon nothing but victuals and drink.'

'She gave them some *broth*, she gave them some *bread.*'

'She went to the tavern for *white wine and red,*
And when she got back, the dog stood on his head.'

You shall have a little *fishy*
In a little dishy.

'Dear sensibility, O la!
I heard a *little lamb* cry ba-a.'

'You, nor I, nor nobody knows,
Where oats, *peas*, *beans* and barley grows.'

'The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker,
All jumped out of a *roasted potato.*'

According to the state of the market and the condition of the family pocket-book, we sometimes substituted here:

'*Goosey*, goosey, gander,
Whither shall I wander?'

or

'Hickety, pickety, my pretty *hen*
Laid good eggs for gentlemen.'

Then generally followed an egg salad, most inappropriate from a gourmet's point of view, but demanded by this riddle-verse.

'In a marble white as milk,
Lined with skin as soft as silk;
Within a fountain, crystal clear,
A golden apple doth appear.
No doors there are to this strong-hold,
Yet thieves break in and steal the gold.'

If we reached this point in the dinner and dear little Ching Lee had neither served the fish raw, nor the lamb scorched, we were comparatively at peace and went on, swimmingly, with

A *pie* sat on a pear-tree

or

The Queen of Hearts, she made some *Tarts*,
All on a summer day.

or

And you shall have *strawberries, sugar and cream*

according to the season.

The remaining courses naturally followed:

'You shall have an *apple*,
You shall have a *plum*,'

'*Oranges* and lemons
Says the bells of St. Clemens.'

'I had a little *nut* tree.'

'When I was a bachelor I lived by myself,
And all the *bread* and *cheese* I got, I put upon the shelf.'

'One, two, three, how good you be,
I love *coffee*, and Billy loves *tea*.'

The last page always held the appropriate rhyme:

'What they ate I can't tell,
But 'tis known very well
That none of the party grew fat.'

As far as that is concerned, they might indeed have grown fat with laughter, for I have never known Kate wittier than she was on these occasions, and as we always furnished prizes of incredible value to the guests who could complete the various Mother Goose rhymes, there was much friendly rivalry among the girls and much impromptu verse-making on the part of the men.

CHAPTER IX

HIGH DAYS AND HOLIDAYS

THESE yellowed and faded programmes, menus, memoranda of past days, drift about me as I write, like fallen leaves, and their rustle brings to mind many dear old friends whose passing makes the world a sadder one.

Here is a leaflet that tells of a festival in honor of Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, always a devoted friend and admirer of my sister's. This was held in the lofty studio of Mr. F. Edwin Elwell, the sculptor, whose house on West Eleventh Street was my sister's first home in New York after her marriage to Mr. George C. Riggs.

The unusual surroundings — the gleam of marble here and there, the leaping fire in its frame of Italian ironwork, the tiny stars of flame in the Roman lamps, the little balcony at one end of the room hung with its Venetian embroideries — would have enlivened a duller company, but there was a meaning in the little festival and the heroine of the day was a happy one.

The following dainty leaflet was placed before each guest:

"It was through a brilliant inspiration of Kate's that a banquet became part of the performance."

"The One I knew The Best of All."

DÉJEUNER

TO

Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett

"She collected all she could and covered it with vivid creations. * * And how the audience was enthralled!"

Programme

"The **Party** was, in fact, not all cakes and ale."

MRS. BURNETT'S "STORY OF A HAWTHORN TREE"
TOLD BY MISS NORA SMITH

"She went on telling the story and the listeners hung on her words and nourished themselves with deadly indigestibles * * * And nobody died."

"Soon Kate had another inspiration."

SONGS OF CHILD LIFE
BY MISS SALLY FROTHINGHAM AKERS

A.	WHO HAS THE WHITEST LAMBKINS?"	REINECKE
B.	IN WINTER	STEVENSON-NEVINS
C.	SINGING IN THE RAIN	
D.	HEROES	HERFORD-JOHNS
E.	A FABLE	
F.	BYE BABY	BOOTT
G.	AN APRIL GIRL	FAIRLAMB

WORDS BY MARY MAPES DODGE

Jan. 29, 1897 *131 W. 11th St.*

These songs of child life, a tribute to Mrs. Burnett, whose child-pictures had brought her love and fame and fortune, were sung from the little balcony, which had been converted into a music-room, and the blooming girl who sang them was a tender interpreter of their charm.

There are many other interesting programmes and suggestions in the 'Portfolio of High Days and Holidays,' as we called it, records of 'good times' at home and abroad, readings, concerts of plantation melodies and Spanish folk-songs sung by both sisters in England and Scotland, evenings in Quillcote Barn, and many notes of dinners to celebrities, domestic and foreign, at which Mr. Riggs, a charming raconteur and admirable host, assisted in presiding.

To these occasions belongs the 'Autograph Tablecloth,' which is, I think, unique as a storehouse of celebrated names. On great occasions when some grandee of art, music, drama, literature, or the world of affairs was to be present, the table was laid with this beautiful cloth, and the guest asked to write his name upon it before the meal was completed. Next morning the autograph was taken to an exquisite needlewoman who embroidered it and thus fixed it on the cloth for posterity. In the course of twenty-eight years of married life the Riggs autograph tablecloth gathered up one

hundred and nine names, all of the most eminent in their several lines, until it might almost be used for a volume of 'Who's Who in Stardom.'

I find in the old Portfolio also several pages in my sister's writing, describing an entertainment given in 1894 in aid of the New York Kindergarten Association, and I will copy them here, just as she set them down. The entertainment consisted of scenes and songs, etc., from Du Maurier's 'Trilby,' then at the height of its amazing popularity. Both music and tableaux, I remember, were rendered exquisitely by some of the best artists; some of the loveliest girls in New York society sold programmes, and the crowded house was most responsive.

Wholly on the slender reputation of an auction of manuscript the year before, writes my sister, I was begged to sell an autographed copy of 'Trilby,' together with the original manuscript of 'Ben Bolt' — which had been beautifully sung by Miss Sally Frothingham Akers.

The auction was to be in the intermission and I had to face a front row of beaux and belles representing Trilby herself, Taffy, Sandy, Zou-Zou, and Little Billee.

Notes for a speech I can conceal in a book, a programme, or a piece of music-manuscript, but the tragedy with me is to think on my feet, to remember anything of what I am to say, or to make my verbs agree with their subjects in number and person. My mind at such times is like a squirrel-cage with

its occupant racing around and around within it. I am 'Mont Blanc dehors,' but 'Vesuve dedans!' as an ardent but indiscreet French teacher once said in explaining his sentiments toward me in my early youth.

General Horace Porter and Hon. Joseph Choate, famous for impromptu speaking, gave me advice to be used on this occasion, but they were both in the audience, and so was G. C. R. as one of the patrons, so I naturally forgot everything that had been told me, including the story that General Porter said would bring down any house if I told it when there was a halt in the bidding. You can prepare an impromptu speech days before the event, but what are you to do when the bidding begins, or fails to begin, and you are flung entirely on your own resources? I had gone through this tragedy on the former occasion noted above, when Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith had auctioned a manuscript story of mine, and I one of his, which turned out to be typewritten, occasioning much merriment in the audience.

I turned the incident to good account, and at last a dear elderly lady sitting in front, rose, saying: 'I collect manuscripts, but not typed ones; however, I'll bid one hundred dollars because I like the way you take your hurdles!' This sally brought down the house and that auction terminated in good humor. My only hope in this second attempt lay in the fact that the same beneficent lady sat again in the front row and smiled at me.

To aid my treacherous memory my method was to stuff my sleeves, the bodice of my dress, and other hiding places with 'spontaneous' verses, triolets, jingles, written in advance, often with the help

of my sister, to be used in the awful pauses that occur when the auctioneer wishes to get two hundred and fifty dollars for the article shown, and no one wishes to give more than ten. (I cannot think why any one should choose this nerve-racking profession in which to earn a livelihood!) I have preserved some more or less helter-skelter notes of this, my last attempt to gain money for a cause by the (to me) most difficult method extant, and they run about as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

To me has been accorded the privilege and the pleasure of selling this book at auction for the benefit of the New York Kindergarten Association. I call it indeed a privilege to serve this cause, but as for the pleasure, that is not so clear. No sane person could see anything agreeable about the ordinary auction where it is the unhappy auctioneer's business either to sell something for nothing at all, or nothing at all for something, as the case may be. My only hope of pleasure lies in you; that an audience composed of such beauty, fashion, genius, distinction, wealth, and I *hope* generosity, cannot fail to appreciate the benefits I propose to confer upon it in the sale of this magnificent offering. I have not even named the volume; there is no need. What book should I be likely to offer here in this particular month of this particular year? Is it not true that, at least in the little reading world of society, everybody is reading the same book at the same time?

What an anachronism I should be did I offer to sell 'Robert Elsmere'; or 'Helen's Babies.' How I should be pitied if I were to struggle with former

favorites like 'David Harum,' 'Van Bibber,' 'Pomona,' or 'The Rise of Silas Lapham' (though their authors are in the audience and might perhaps venture a timid bid); but when the last reading human being in the universe has consumed 'Trilby' (and from the published accounts of the sales this date is not far distant), perhaps the satisfied public will turn again to its local fiction, and 'Van Bibber' be clasped again to the casual maidenly bosom of New York. At present nobody clasps anything but 'Trilby'!

A friend of mine unwrapped a package the other morning and exclaimed: 'Why, this is strange; who has been sending me "Trilby" from Tracy's?'

'It is mine, Mum,' said the parlor maid who was dusting the bookcase.

'Why did you buy it, Ellen?' asked my friend. 'You could have read my copy.'

'Oh, it isn't that we haven't copies downstairs, Mum, but the butler is so crazy about his, he won't lend it to nobody, and the cook and the chambermaid are always busy with theirs, so I don't want to be beholden to them; I want my own.'

The parlor maid wants her 'own Trilby'! Happy Du Maurier! Happy anybody who can write a book that butlers won't lend, that everybody refuses to borrow because they love it so madly that they must own it! I am not offering you a Tracy copy, however; it is a fine, specially bound edition given us by Harper Brothers. — The binding alone would lend dignity to any library table. — I do not pretend to say there is no element of risk in this bargain. Twenty years hence, the packet in my hand may be worth fifty thousand dollars and it may not even be worth five thousand. But there is the same risk in

buying real estate; the town may grow the wrong way. No one can tell. Similarly the cautious man of business may say, 'How am I to know that the public taste will not grow away from this author and I be left with an expensive piece of property on my hands?' To this I answer that if you expect to make great gains or conquests of any sort you must be intrepid and face the worst.

I hope that ladies will bid more freely than usual. Inasmuch as, under the climate and customs of this so-called monogamous country, they cannot have Mr. Du Maurier himself, this manuscript will prove a great solace to some lonely heart, *if* the lonely heart can command money enough to purchase it!

This is no ordinary bargain-shop, ladies and gentlemen, like those in which you are induced to buy five pounds of English Breakfast Tea (when you always drink Oolong) by the promise of an ugly cup and saucer (which you don't want) thrown in to help the sale.

There have been in certain benighted quarters of society doubts of the character of 'Trilby' herself, which, should she offer to join an orthodox church, might conceivably be brought up for argument.

For instance, I have received a cablegram from the 'Devonshire Parson' who has been so eloquent on the subject of 'Trilby' in the British periodicals. He apparently has not a good opinion of Du Maurier's heroine. The message reads:

'I really must protest, you know,
Against your selling "Trilby,"
Her moral code was very low,
I really must protest, you know,

Of course I cant't attend your show,
Against my views it will be.
I really must protest, you know,
Against your selling "Trilby."'
[Signed] Devonshire Parson

Probably 'Trilby' had seen more of the world than 'Sweet Alice' in 'Ben Bolt,' and if I were selling the two ladies instead of the book in which they appear, there is no doubt in my mind which would bring the higher price. (The enthusiastic applause of seven gentlemen sitting on my immediate left confirms my opinion!)

Pardon me if I show the volume instead of handing it to the audience. Even in the choice gatherings of five-dollar persons, irresponsible beings of an ordinary dollar-and-a-half social standing will creep in, and one of these might deface or maltreat this superb and valuable article, or even be seized with sudden cupidity, or kleptomania. Suffice it to say that it is in all respects exactly as I have stated — or the money — probably — will be refunded. Everything will be fair and aboveboard in this auction. Would that it were not! There are no spurious bids or bidders located here and there! Would that there were! It was the specified intention of the managers to fling me into this sea of wretchedness under the impression that I should swim rather than drown. They are right; I shall; I must; but would that there were rows of dishonorable but sympathetic persons determined to make false, hypothetical, hypocritical bids, thereby rousing enthusiasm in the audience, stirring the sluggish currents of emulation, greed, and covetousness in your breasts, and waking my failing courage into life!

As to the terms of sale, let no one be dismayed if he has left his purse at home on the piano. I will accept Hypothecated Watered Stocks, Preferred Collaterals, Funded Dividends, Checked Mortgages, Quit Claims, Fee Tail Simples, Priority Deeds, Ground Rents, Liens and Attachments, Foreclosures, Widow's Thirds, Widow's Mites, Dower Rights, Promises of Minor Heirs, or any other gilt-edged security. If there are any others I cannot remember their names; if I could I should go on forever to escape the dreaded hour of bidding, that moment when a silence that can be felt falls upon audiences. The moment has come, ladies and gentlemen.

Twenty-five dollars! Do I hear twenty-five? I repeat it because bids are always repeated at auction and because I like to indulge in a little joke; but, of course, twenty-five dollars is the merest pleasantry. The sum of twenty-five dollars bears no relation whatever to the worth of the article, the dignity of the cause represented, the generosity of the audience, and, I might modestly add, to the merits of the auctioneer. Twenty-five dollars! Good gracious, ladies and gentlemen; the performers are to have a supper here to-night. How do you suppose it is to be paid for at such figures?

Do I hear forty dollars? That is a little better. Thank you; going, going, going, but without the slightest intention of going home with anybody at forty dollars! It is very embarrassing that, look here, there, everywhere as I may, I keep meeting the eyes of my author-friends, who are charming people, but who will never think of buying this book. They can write one every bit as good themselves, and if the public doesn't think so, that only shows its

crass stupidity. Fifty dollars? or was it sixty? — The acoustics of the ballroom are imperfect. Fifty? I feared so. Imperfect acoustics are never flattering.

'Please give me some more!'
The auctioneer cried,
'Of course, it's a bore
But please give me some more.
Yes, I know we're all poor —
The fact can't be denied,
Still, — give me some more,'
The auctioneer cried.

Seventy dollars? A bid of seventy dollars from the distinguished gentleman with white hair. Oh, pardon me, I thought I understood you seventy. You did not bid at all? I am all confusion! Never mind; the lady with the emeralds bids seventy. Mr. Choate told me to look at my audience searchingly and find the men who showed in their eyes an unmistakable longing for this book, and then, when found, fix my attention on them and play them against each other. This is more difficult than appears. I found five minutes ago a man who looked very rich and very amiable; he also looked as if he wanted something madly, but it cannot be this book, for he hasn't made a bid. Perhaps he simply wants to go home. How is an auctioneer to discriminate between the different expressions of anxiety? I observe that you like this idea and that bidding will be more brisk. Eighty dollars? Thank you!

A cablegram has just come from Gerald Du Maurier, grandson of the great author.

'Don't sell it short of twenty pound;
Some Yankee'll give it gladly!

You've hosts of bidders on the ground,
Don't sell it short of twenty pound!
The lucky buyer I'll be bound
  The world will envy madly —
Don't sell it short of twenty pound;
  Some Yankee'll give it gladly!'

Ninety-five dollars? Only ninety-five? Think twice, fond parent, before you allow this treasure to escape. Have you daughters who spend their idle moments reading common, unsigned copies of Mr. Howells, Mr. Stockton, Mr. Davis, or Mr. Stedman? They are all present, but their office is to write, not buy, books. Have you erring sons who read not at all? Then buy this book and make your home attractive. Imagine a united family circle around the electric light and the cheerful steam heater, all bound together in endearing ties by the spell of this magical volume. I beg of you to reach and pass Gerald Du Maurier's suggestion of twenty pounds.

One hundred and twenty-five dollars? Thirty dollars earned by my last sentimental appeal! I accept it at once, without further oratory, being completely out of matter! The buyer is a lady who naturally has read 'Trilby,' but who, as I chance to know, greatly prefers the heroines of 'Pride and Prejudice' and 'Sense and Sensibility.' I feel that she is giving the money to the free kindergartens and the managers thank her for her generosity and unselfish devotion to the cause of childhood.

CHAPTER X

VIRGINIBUS PUERISQUE

THE four chapters, VIII, IX, X, and XI, in the very middle of this little book, should by rights be surrounded by a ring fence, to which should be attached a warning placard, reading *Virginibus Puerisque*. They are written for my sister's great public of adored and adoring girls, and for their attendant youths, of course, so all morbid, melancholy, pessimistic, dyspeptic, cynical, prematurely agéd folk should avoid them.

Such persons would probably scoff at what Wordsworth said, in his eighteenth-century way, about his own poems, that they 'co-operated with the benign tendencies in human nature and society, and in their degree would be efficacious in making men wiser, better and happier.' If they jeered at Wordsworth, they would doubtless flout as well the idea that the simple gayeties here set down might be efficacious in something the same way, and, if they could not make men wiser or better, might at least make them innocently happier.

A few memories among the host of delightful happenings seem worthy of preservation, and one concerns a matinée at the Colony Club,

New York, which my sister planned during the years that she was one of its Governors and Chairman of its Literary Committee. She was, as I have said, devoted to things dramatic and an ardent student of plays of the past, of which she possessed a fine collection, so the matinée in question arranged itself appropriately under the title of 'Eighteenth-Century Scenes and Songs.'

'The Lass with the Delicate Air' (Dr. Arne), 'My Lovely Celia' (Munro), and 'The Sweet Little Girl that I Love' (Hook), were sung between the literary numbers on the programme, which consisted of scenes from Farquhar's 'Beaux' Stratagem,' Congreve's 'The Way o' the World,' and Vanbrugh's 'The Provok'd Wife,' read by Miss Kitty Cheatham, Mrs. Harriet Dellenbaugh, Mrs. Evangeline Blashfield, and Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin.

The occasion was a delightful one, and my sister's prologue to the last-named play so much pleased not only that audience, but several succeeding ones, that it would seem to bear repeating here:

THE WAY O' THE WORLD

PROLOGUE À LA MRS. BRACEGIRDLE

Spoken by Miss Kitty Cheatham

'The Way of the World,' my dear ladies, you'll say,
Was, two centuries back, quite the same as to-day,

Save that manners and customs and speech were more
frank,
And at calling spades *spades* Congreve's muse never
shrank.
But through editing, altering, much crossing-out,
(While losing a joke, now and then, there's no doubt,)
We've preserved much good wit, not so very audacious, —
For to frown on it all would be really ungracious;
So now comes Will Congreve with 'Mirabell's chase.'
No lady, however attractive her face,
Like fair Mistress Millamant e'er was pursued,
Nor e'er one, to *my* mind, more charmingly wooed!
'Tis true the fair Millamant talked like a book;
Such fluency no *modern* lover would brook,
But Mirabell — one can discern by his tone,
Can make her *talk less, when she's really his own!*
She was nonchalant, spirited, piquant and pert!
She asked a high price for herself, did the flirt!
And Mirabell paid, knowing all through his life
The witch, when once married, would prove a good wife!
If all this is old it is still ever new,
'Tis the Way o' the World, and the Woman's Way too!

K. D. W.

Far removed in space, in kind, and in atmosphere is the next 'bit of blue sky,' which the old Portfolio offers — a 'Kindergarten Reunion' in San Francisco in 1915, the Exposition year. My sister journeyed to California that autumn with her husband, not only to see the two expositions, but to visit our brother Philip and his family, and to supervise the production, in Los Angeles, of her play 'Mother Carey's Chickens.' All these things were ac-

complished; everywhere a welcome awaited her, but that of San Francisco was, naturally, most ardent of all, because there still dwelt the greater number of her 'girls' and mine, for by this name we, who have once conducted Kindergarten Training Schools, call all our graduates. There is no bond closer than that of a kindergartner and her educational mother, and this bond was always keenly felt by K. D. W. Her letters of the time overflow with the joy of meeting her foster-children, and on the day of the Reunion she telegraphed a message to me in Maine that radiated happiness, save for the one drawback that I could not be present. Her 'Line-a-Day Book' chronicles in ever-increasing numbers the calls, the notes, the messages, and the arrival of flowers, flowers, and still more flowers. 'Two bathtubs are full,' she writes, 'six vases, four bowls, and all the pitchers and the tumblers I can seize upon. At the Reunion fifty-two of my old girls were present when I entered the room, and I knew them, every one, after all these years and could call them all by name. Most of them had long been married, some of them had children with them, one or two, even, had grandchildren, and every one of the band dissolved in tears and fell upon my neck, as I cried out, "Why, it's Mary, or Kitty, or Agnes, or Laura!" And then there was such outpouring of hearts, such

"reminiscing," such gratitude for what I had taught them and what the kindergarten had brought into their lives.'

'*It was heavenly*,' are the words with which she closes her record, '*a day fit to die on!*'

Of the old-fashioned dances in Quillcote Barn (Hollis, Maine), my sister tells in her 'Garden of Memory.' Many impromptu concerts, readings, tableaux vivants and story-telling evenings were held there also, and a play or two was now and then presented. Few people from the outside world attended these latter functions; they were never advertised and could not have been, one would have supposed, very widely noticed in the public press, yet from these semi-occasional dramatic evenings has grown a banyan tree of a myth, which keeps on spreading and rooting itself in new places, regarding the existence of a 'Quillcote Theatre.' During the summer season the hapless sufferer who pens these lines is in constant receipt of circulars, advertisements, appeals, sample paper, sample tickets, requests for programmes, suggestions for entertainments, etc., all addressed either to the Grillcote, Millcote, Pillcote, or Quillcote Theatre. My spirited remarks when I return these objects are never read, apparently; no typed statements to the effect that there is not now, never was, and never will be a Quillcote Theatre are

credited; and only two months ago the irate manager of a Little Theatre in the West, charged me in his letter with concealing the existence of this institution, probably for some nefarious purpose, though what he did not specify.

Although Kate gives some account of her composition and rendition of 'Bluebeard, a humorous, musical fantasy,' in her Autobiography, she does not give it the space which it really deserves as an absolutely unique entertainment.

Long ago in England there was presented, at the music-halls, I believe, a 'comic song,' if one can so describe it, called 'Bluebeard,' and at some time or other Kate must have heard and remembered it, or part of it. Its opening lines would have been likely to hold the attention of any young person, as you will see:

'The Dark Ages of Juvenile Literature do not contain a
chronicle of greater atrocity,
Than that furnished by a Bashaw of Three Tails, whose
ugly bluebeard was a perfect monstrosity;
Who married three wives successively, one after another,
on a regular railroad of matrimonial velocity,
But finding them in toto,
All very so-so,
Resolved to be revenged upon each one of them by cutting
off her head,
As a punishment for the most unmitigatedly determined
female curiosity,' etc.

VIRGINIBUS PUERISQUE

My intrepid author-and-composer sister seized upon tale and music, turned them inside-out, upside-down, and wrong-end-to, added to them, cut them, pruned them, amplified them, supplied them with entirely new annotations and connotations, and finally converted the composition into the basis of a Wagnerian Lecture Recital, which she dedicated to her friend, Walter Damrosch, 'Master of the Art form,' as she phrased it, which she had so irreverently treated.

As the little book is now out of print, it will perhaps be interesting to reproduce its title-page and preface here.

BLUEBEARD

A MUSICAL FANTASY

BY

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

HEREIN LIES THE STORY OF THE MIRACULOUS DISCOVERY IN A HAT BOX OF AN UNPUBLISHED OPERA BY THE LATE RICHARD WAGNER, DEALING IN THE MOST UNIQUE AND CLIMACTERIC MANNER WITH FEMINISM, TRIAL MARRIAGE, BIGAMY AND POLYGAMY; ITS LIBRETTO AND LEIT-MOTIF HAVE BEEN STUDIED WITH PASSION AND ARE NOW REVEALED WITH RELIGIOUS ZEAL

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PREFACE

More than a dozen years ago musical scholars and critics began to illuminate the musical darkness of New York with lecture-recitals explanatory of the more abstruse German operas. Previous to this era no one had ever thought, for instance, of unfolding the story, or the '*Leit motif*' (if there happened to be any!) in 'The Bohemian Girl,' 'Maritana,' or 'Martha.' These, and many other delightful but thoroughly third-class works, unfolded themselves as they went along, to the entire satisfaction of a public so unbelievably care-free, happy, thoughtless, childlike, and uninstructed, that it hardly seems as if they could have been our ancestors.

Wagner changed all this at a single blow. One could no longer leave one's brains with one's hat in the coat-room when the 'Nibelungen Ring' appeared! Learned critics, pitifully comprehending the fathomless ignorance of the people, began to give lectures on the 'Ring' to large audiences, mostly of ladies, through whom in course of time a certain amount of information percolated and reached the husbands — the somewhat circuitous but only possible method by which æsthetic knowledge can be conveyed to the American male. Women are hopeless idealists! It is not enough for them that their brothers or husbands should pay for the seats at the opera and accompany them there, clad in irreproachable evening dress. Not at all! They wish them to sit erect, keep awake, and look intelligent, and it is but just to say that many of them succeed in doing so. The art-form known as the lecture-recital, then, has succeeded in forcibly educating so large a section of the public that immense audiences gather at the Metropolitan Opera

House, one half of them, at least, in a state of such chastened susceptibility and erudition that the Tetralogy of Wagner has no terrors for them.

The next move was in behalf of the more cryptic, symbolic, hectic, toxic works of the ultra-modern French school, which have been so brilliantly illuminated by their protagonists that thousands of women in the larger cities recognize a master's voice whenever one of his themes is played upon the Victrola.

I shall offer my practically priceless manuscript of 'Bluebeard' for production in French at the Metropolitan, and in English at the Century Opera House; meantime, Mr. Hammerstein is so impressed with its originality, audacity, and tragic power that he is laying the corner-stone for a magnificent new building and will open and close it with 'Bluebeard' in German, if no unforeseen legal complications should prevent.

It is in preparation for all this activity that I issue this brief but epoch-making little work.

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

NEW YORK, *February*, 1914

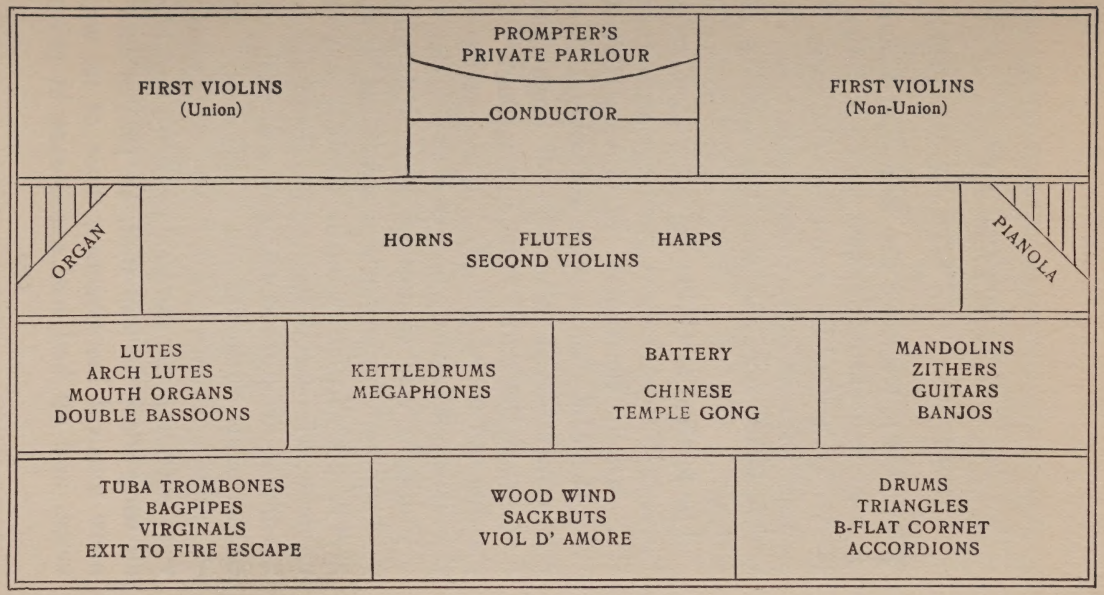
There follows the Cast of Characters, the author's highly fantastic account of the finding of this gem of music and literature, and her explanation of its various *Motive*, several of which appear in the *Vorspiel*. There are distinct inspirations in the naming of these; for instance, the *Blaubart* motive, the *Immerwiederheirathen* (always about to marry again!) the *Siebente Frau* (seventh wife), the '*Bruder*

hoch zu Ross' (brothers on a high horse), the '*Kilkennische Katzen*'; and among all the celebrated musicians who listened to the composition, at one time or another, never one but shouted with joy over every one of them. There is a certain delightful scene which is made notable by the famous '*Suspense Motif*,' one hundred and seventeen bars of doubt given by the big brasses and contra-bassoons, which was a particular favorite of Mr. Damrosch's, and no one who ever heard the recital presumed to question its author's dictum that it was, as a whole, 'fairly murmurous with morality, sending young men and women to their homes impressed with the risks and snares involved in bigamy and polygamy and giving them an added sense of the security and gravity of the marriage tie, when sparingly used.'

It is to be remembered that the diva sang the entire opera to her own brilliant accompaniment, pausing to explain the various *motive* in true Damroschian style, and that thus it was a real 'tour de force' and well deserved the unceasing laughter and applause which it always evoked.

The last time it was given was in New York on the occasion of the silver wedding anniversary of the author-composer, and it was then as brilliantly successful as it had been from the first.

SUGGESTED ARRANGEMENT OF ORCHESTRA FOR THE PRESENTATION OF 'BLUEBEARD'—K.D.W.



CHAPTER XI

TOWN AND COUNTRY GAYETIES

BEFORE we leave the Blue-Sky Country, let me chronicle two more gayeties of K. D. W.'s devising — one at Quillcote, our summer home in Maine, and one in New York, which latter occasion was the opening of a series.

The festival at Quillcote was a Concert and Literary Entertainment given by a celebrated (and wholly fictitious) 'McGibeny Family.' Why the McGibenys were so called I do not now remember, if indeed I ever knew, but I fancy that the name went so trippingly upon the lips and was so adapted to tongue-twisters that it spontaneously occurred to my sister.

Quillcote was brimming over with guests that summer, among others a musical 'Cousin Mary,' a Collegian 'Cousin George,' a young minister, who was a devoted family friend, and his school-girl sister, Lucy, now a distinguished educational authority in California. Two charming maidens, great lovers of my sister, were spending the summer near by, and as we all sang more or less well, all played one or more musical instruments, most of us wrote verse, and all had had experience in private

K. D. W., 1897

theatricals, a complete dramatic and musical company was already on the spot, without need of foreign importations. The ingredients were there and all was ready but the leaven, which Kate could always be trusted to supply.

We sat under the great maple in the evenings with guitars, Spanish and Portuguese, banjos and ukuleles, and amused one another with our various specialties, the gay Collegian instructing us in a variety of songs, most inappropriate to the age and position of the elders of the party, but all the more enjoyed, perhaps.

Our ever-vivacious and interested mother formed the audience on these occasions, but we felt ourselves to be so amusing that we sighed to conquer other worlds and to delight our neighbors, also. Considering these things in the night-watches, the 'McGibeny Family' sprung, full-panoplied, from my sister's brain, and she devised a plan to bring these talented artists to the village for an evening's entertainment. The programme gave us little thought or trouble; we were all ready (or so we thought, and proved it, too!) to do almost any act in 'refined vaudeville' at a moment's notice, but what did need considerable reflection was the means by which we were to delude our neighbors into believing that the 'McGibeny Family' was a reality and engaged by my sister, at a fabulous price, to give a Musical and

Dramatic Evening at Quillcote. She was quite equal to the occasion, however, coached us in our parts, and sent us out to call on all the neighbors at suitable times and dilate upon the coming artists and their accomplishments. How many believed us I do not know, but at least one ancient dame swallowed the fiction whole and came to remonstrate with my mother, urging that it was 'kind o' risky to take in so many folks you don't know — theatre folks, too, right into the house with you.'

Mother, although passionately (and sometimes quite inconveniently) truthful, took the remonstrance calmly, and finally convinced her caller that the artists were all of unimpeachable standing and morals and warranted not to cast a blot upon any family escutcheon, a statement which has proved exact up to this date, at any rate.

The consultations that followed for the next day or two were weighty ones; Quillcote hummed like a beehive, and from any one of the windows at any moment the Collegian might be seen practising negro melodies with his banjo on the lawn, the young minister hurrying to and fro gathering materials for his 'turn,' and somebody always scribbling verses under the elm trees.

We selected our stage names according to what we thought our most attractive special-

ties. Kate was, of course, Ma McGibeny; our clerical friend, Pa McGibeny; the two summer girls chose to be Cissy Loftus McGibeny and Mary Anderson McGibeny; Cousin George called himself Brignoli, and I, Harriet Beecher Stowe; Lucy dubbed herself 'Trottie,' while Cousin Mary declared that as accompanist she would not presume to give herself any name at all.

The Opening Chorus, sung by the whole strength of the company to the tune of 'Oh, Susanna,' was practised till the rafters rang, and mother declared that we made such a noise that all hope of persuading the neighbors that they were to hear foreign talent must be abandoned. We were to assemble in full costume in the kitchen on the eventful night and march, all singing, into the sitting-room to our places in front of the great fireplace, and I am not at all sure that the cook during these rehearsals did not consider us a band of dangerous lunatics and think of giving notice.

I can find no written copy of the words of our Processional, but no member of the McGibeny Family, I am assured ever has forgotten, or could forget them.

I

I had a dream de oder night,
When eberyting was still —

I t'ought I saw de McGibeny Familee
A-comin' up de hill.
All steppin' in a row, wid a big banjo,
Dat family passed me by,
Such a high-toned style, such a fascinatin' smile,
I never did espy!
Oh, Susanna,[1] doan' yer cry for me;
For I'm gwine up along to de Quillcote Show,
For to see de McGibeny Familee!

There were three verses, each accompanied by a ringing chorus, in which the members of the company and their accomplishments were lauded. Who was the author of the inspired words I do not remember, but it shows no distinct literary style and I think must have been a 'composite.'

On the morning of the entertainment, Cissy Loftus, Mary Anderson, little 'Trottie' (then about five feet ten in height!), and the accomplished and versatile Brignoli stole out directly after breakfast and met the stage in a thicket of alders a few rods above Quillcote. The friendly driver was somewhat surprised when held up by this company, but he soon grasped the idea, and, as he had no passengers, at once seated the McGibeny ladies within his vehicle. Brignoli, who was attired in corduroys and a broad sombrero, preferred the top of the stage, and rode down the village street cracking a long-handled whip and shouting greetings

[1] These words, *fortissimo!*

to the populace. (There are but seven houses on our street, including Quillcote, so the populace in this case meant one old gentleman and four old ladies, at their respective gates.) Some stir was created by the arrival of the stage at the post-office, but the ladies hastily left it at the bridge that unites the two villages and returned home by unfrequented paths. Brignoli, whose appearance was sufficiently exotic to defy detection, and who was a stranger to the community as well, remained on the stage until later in the morning, serving as an admirable advertising agent, more especially as he had fastened to the vehicle an enormous cardboard sign bearing the legend:

! QUILLCOTE !

Monster Aggregation of

Unparalleled Talent

at

Quillcote

To-night

See the McGibeny Family, just
returned from a Tour of Concerts
before all the Crowned Heads
of
Europe!

A hasty supper was served in the late afternoon, and the sitting-room and parlor set out with all the chairs in the house and all that could be borrowed from the neighbors. The audience gathered early, and the performers, preening their feathers for the last time in the kitchen, were exhilarated to a degree impossible to describe. Cousin Mary, Cissy Loftus, and Mary Anderson wore their usual simple evening dresses; the stately 'Trottie,' who was to pose as an Infant Phenomenon, had her skirts greatly shortened, had found somewhere a pair of striped stockings, and wore her hair in a pigtail; Harriet Beecher Stowe had borrowed a trailing green silk gown and a pair of spectacles, and had curled her locks in bunches each side of her face, à la Mrs. Browning, while 'Pa' had powdered his hair and donned a long linen duster. Cousin George had maintained from the first that he could not give his specialties, properly, unless he came in 'black face,' so this privilege was accorded him, as well as the cowboy costume.

This decision naturally gave 'Ma' McGibeny 'furiously to think,' as Brignoli was supposed to be a blood-brother of her fair daughters, but she surmounted the difficulty by explaining later, as she introduced the various members of her family to the audience, that all had been born in foreign countries while she and her

husband had been on tour and that her son's ebony hue must be attributed to the power of 'Afric's sunny skies.'

I have purposely left my sister's costume to the last, as she had remained in her room until the company assembled and it was a complete surprise to all of us. She had put on, one over the other, four starched white petticoats and upon these a black silk dress, whose skirt mother had remodelled to a balloon-like width. Her hair, then what is called ash-blonde in color, was parted in the middle, waved and puffed about her ears; she wore white stockings, ankle-ties, and a pair of one-button white kid gloves, but in spite of all handicaps she really looked exquisitely lovely, and the simpering grace, the airy affectations, the mock modesty of her gestures and attitudes as she sang and postured in the complicated march with which we entered, were those of a born actress, exhilarated by a sympathetic audience.

Our programme ran as follows and I have the identical sheet of stiff brown paper on which my sister pencilled the various numbers:

Programme

1: Entering March and Chorus — Entire McGibeny Family
'Oh, Susanna'
2: Introduction of Artists to Audience — Ma McGibeny
3: Solo and Chorus — 'Lucky Jim' — Brignoli and Family
4: McGibeny Method, illustrated — Pa and Ma McGibeny

5: Impersonations and Imitations	Cissy Loftus
6: Solo and Dance — 'The Gay Tom-tit'	Mary Anderson
7: Recitations (first appearance)	Little Trottie
8: Negro Melodies, with banjo solo	Brignoli
9: Japanese Jugglery and Feats of Strength and Skill	Pa McGibeny
10: Author's Reading	H. B. Stowe
11: Piano Solo, with original variations	Ma McGibeny
12: Sleep-Walking Scene from 'Macbeth'	Mary Anderson
13: Song and Dance — 'The Belle of Hollis Town'	Cissy Loftus
14: Grand Finale — 'Susan Brown'	Entire Company

Good-Night

Among the high lights of this programme were the choruses, which were really most effective with so many more than average voices, and the 'McGibeny Method,' illustrated by Pa and Ma, in which they taught us one by one, and then all together, the words and music of an unusually idiotic song, whose first lines were

'Said a feeble youth to his anxious mother,
I must cross the wide, wide sea.'

The tall Trottie's recitation, or attempted recitation, of 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,' was a delicious bit, when her anxious parents and sisters hoisted her to a footstool and broke down in convulsive sobs with her, when she failed to remember her lines. Pa McGibeny's Japanese Jugglery and Feats of Strength and Skill would not have deceived an infant, but were received with great joy by the audience,

and during my Author's Reading, for which I had selected a lengthy extract from Pollok's 'Course of Time,' my entire family, save the faithful Ma McGibeny, stole from the room leaving me holding forth alone, with my eyes glued to the page.

These were all amusing enough, but no one who was present will ever forget Ma McGibeny's piano solo with original variations. She was handed to the piano by Pa, in his linen duster; she swept a marvellous courtesy to the audience; wreathed in smiles, she took off the short white gloves, cocking her head fantastically, while repeating appropriate anecdotes; she adjusted her billowy skirts upon the piano-stool and solemnly played 'Tell Aunt Rhody' with one finger, in the treble clef. Upon tumultuous applause she repeated it in the bass, then with both hands, then in thirds, then in octaves, then with crossed hands, and finally with a series of variations which left the audience helpless with laughter.

No agonizing headache disturbed her peace that evening, she was young and lovely, radiant with gayety, and, in spite of her nonsensical array and the stream of nonsense that flowed from her lips, she made a picture as exquisite and dainty as a painting on ivory.

'The Gifted Spinsters,' a company of tal-

ented girls invited by K. D. W. to gather at her New York home on several occasions, was composed of any unmarried authors, editors, journalists, painters, musicians, sculptors, dancers, or actresses on her visiting list, who happened to be accessible on any certain evening. Now and then maidens were admitted who boasted of their ability as needlewomen, and these were obliged to bring samples of their handiwork; but for the most part the guests were professionals, semi-professionals, and would-be professionals.

The Spinsters had their own rallying-song composed by Kate to the tune of 'King Arthur Had Three Sons,' and when gathered together, they rolled forth in ringing chorus their scorn of men, their joy in spinsterhood, and their irrevocable determination never to change their condition.

They warbled in 'good set terms,' at each gathering, their sympathy with their hostess, the 'Grand Panjandrum' of the Society, but agreed that her excuse for marriage seemed to be a fairly valid one, and finally, in a burst of melody, acclaimed her, as follows:

'To the leader of the Spinsters let us sing,
Let us sing!
To the Literary Doctor, praises bring,
Praises bring!
Tho' her head the laurel wears,

She has never put on airs,
And of all the authors living she's the king,
She's the king.' [1]

The invitations for this festival, I remember, were sent out on sheets of foolscap paper, and ran as follows:

The Grand Panjandrum, Kate Douglas Wiggin, requests the pleasure of your company at a meeting of the Gifted Spinsters on the evening of February 20th, 19—. You are requested to wear some badge or insignia denoting your profession.

Maids, chaperons, messenger-boys (or husbands) may be ordered at twelve o'clock.

The Grand Panjandrum did not appear until the guests had assembled, and I received them, my badge being a long rose-colored quill with a fluffy tip, fastened slantwise across the bodice of my pale-blue gown. One charming actress, I remember, had pinned a hare's foot to her shoulder; another, who was lately arrived from Holland, came in full Dutch costume, with wooden shoes. A well-known pianist carried a toy Steinway under her arm, another a toy violin; one concert singer was completely garbed in sheets of music, and another wore a necklace of musical notes which she had cut from cardboard and gilded. The dancer of the evening had fashioned for her-

[1] Carolyn Wells.

self a similar chain of doll's slippers, gilded; the painters came with palettes and brushes, the sculptors in their modelling frocks, tools in hand, and the writers carried books, or proof-sheets, or pencils and pens.

We had a gay half-hour examining one another's badges, and at the end of that time, announced by the beating of a Chinese gong, the Grand Panjandrum entered, in white satin and pearls, dragging a child's cart, loaded with her works and wearing an immense gilded halo upon her august head.

There was fervent applause, of course, and then the company broke into the rallying-song of the Gifted Spinsters, at the end of which the (then) spinster, Carolyn Wells, stepped from the ranks and recited the following verses:

L'ENVOI OF THE GIFTED SPINSTERS

When Earth's last Spinster is married, and the nuptial knots are all tied, —
When the oldest maid is a matron, and the youngest bud is a bride;
The tale of the Gifted Spinsters shall still be handed down,
And the name of the Grand Panjandrum win ever fresh renown.

Writ fair on the page of History, since ever the world was new,
There have been some famous spinsters, and most of them gifted, too;

Spinsters, both rare and precious, whom never a man might win
To walk up the aisle to 'Mendelssohn,' and back to 'Lohengrin';

Spinsters who held their freedom too dear to sacrifice
For a spray of orange-blossoms, or a pelting shower of rice;
Women who were not tempted by presents or trousseau, —
Women who bravely broke men's hearts, — women who dared say 'No!'

Up from the past we call them, — back from the ages dark, —
Minerva and Trojan Helen, Portia and Joan of Arc;
Maid Marian, Maid of Athens, Zenobia, Good Queen Bess, —
None of these haughty ladies bashfully murmured 'Yes.'

Alice and Phœbe Cary, Britomart, Judith and Jael;
Jean Ingelow and Jane Austen and Florence Nightingale;
Dorcas and Rosa Bonheur, Elaine and Mistress Nell.
The Maid of Perth, The Maid of the Mist, and La Grande Mademoiselle.

Pomona and Pocahontas, Pierrette and Columbine,
Ten Wise and Foolish Virgins, Three Graces, Muses Nine;
Maude Adams, Marie Corelli, Susan B. Anthony,
Miss Mary MacLane, Miss Tarbell, Miss Jeannette Gilder, and me.

But all of the names of the Spinsters, gifted and wise and good,
May be found in the red-backed volume, 'Who's Who in Spinsterhood.'

And we vote by acclamation, the most gifted, wise, and bright,
Is Our Lady, The Grand Panjandrum, the Goddess of Sweetness and Light.

The evening was not half long enough for all the gayety, for each Spinster had been asked to furnish evidence, which must be satisfactory to the audience, of her right to belong to the organization, and music and recitations, dancing, sketching, and impromptu verse, followed in delightful sequence.

When this was over, the Grand Panjandrum requested her guests to be seated, furnished them with writing-materials, and invited them to compete for a prize, to be granted for the greatest number of correct answers to the following conundrums:

Gifted Spinsters of History and Literature

1: The name of what gifted Spinster suggests Rocks and Lighthouses?
2: What Spinster did great execution with a Rake?
3: What Scottish Spinster do you always think of as seated on a Horse?
4: What poetic Spinster watched for a Lover who never returned?
5: What Spinster is associated in your memory with a Bathtub?
6: What two acrid Spinsters in fiction were named for the Virtues and practised the Vices?

7: Elderly Spinsters, you know, sometimes have a fancy for the young. What youthful Spinster in literature is famous for her intimacy with a Kid?
8: Give the name of the girl in English fiction who signed herself 'Your Sincere Spinster.'
9: What famous Spinster is associated with a Johnson's Dictionary?
10: Name the three most gifted Spinsters of English literature.
11: What gifted Spinster devoted herself to the fortunes of a luckless Prince?
12: What Spinster author presented to her readers a moral problem — a problem of *choice* suggested by every Druggist's Window?

These conundrums (and a host of others which we did not present) had been prepared by my sister and myself the previous day, and so much easier is it to ask questions than to answer them that I confess myself quite unable at the moment to reply to some of them. Miss Elizabeth Jordan, then editor of 'Harper's Bazaar,' made the highest record among the guests, I believe, but the gayety was great while the guessing was going on.

The evening closed with impromptu tableaux, the company being divided into two camps, each provided with a Captain and furnished with the names of historic and literary spinsters whose effigies they were to present in the dining-room at a given signal. All the re-

sources of the house were called upon immediately and the maids hurried hither and yon like leaves in a hurricane. . . . There was a breathless hush — when at the ringing of a silver bell the dining-room doors slid open and upon the carved table of old oak stood a gorgeous Spinster, draped in a sheet, one pewter dish-cover on her head, another large one held to her breast, while in her right hand she brandished a sword hastily snatched from my brother-in-law's collection of armor. 'Joan of Arc,' we shouted excitedly, and the excitement was no less when the second camp showed a robed and crowned Queen Elizabeth, at whose feet the gallant Sir Walter Raleigh was laying an ermine evening-wrap.

The lapse of some years enables me to say with modest pride that my camp presented by far the most beautiful picture of all, when we were given as subject, 'Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat.'

Hastily gathering my followers about me in the butler's pantry, I cried, 'Whose hair will come down, girls? Will yours?' turning to a primrose head in the doorway. 'It would,' she confessed, and it did, and when its white-draped owner was stretched out on the ever-convenient dining-table, when we found a lily for her right hand, a letter for her left, and covered her to her waist with a brocade curtain, then, with 'all

her bright hair streaming down' and the lights all dimmed, she was indeed a lovely vision. I posed her after Toby Rosenthal's painting —

'The dead, oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood,'

and added a gifted literary Spinster, with bent head, wrapped in a dark cloak, for the 'old servitor' of the poem.

That was, by unanimous consent, the most beautiful picture of the series, but the gayest was when those magic doors opened and a dusky Pocahontas was seen, bound and ready for execution. We waited breathlessly for her deliverer, when, to the horror of the Grand Panjandrum, her husband rushed in, wrapped in my Shaker cape and provided with Joan of Arc's sword.

It appeared upon judicial inquiry that he had been discovered by a Spinster, concealed behind the window-curtains, but as he furnished proof that he had but just returned from his club, and had only been there five minutes, he was forgiven and allowed to share in the refreshments, which closed the delightful evening.

CHAPTER XII

FUGITIVE VERSE

OUR father's daughters were born with some little facility in writing light verse and poetry of the minor order — a gift directly inherited from our brilliant young sire whose candle of life was snuffed out when it had hardly yet begun to burn. He 'dropped into poetry' on every possible occasion, as many manuscripts in the family can testify, and among my sister's papers were numberless verses written from early girlhood to the close of life; most of which had never been published. A few of these are here appended to show something of her inborn gayety of spirit, which needed no carbonizing, no outside aid of chemicals, but bubbled from an ever-living spring within. There are one or two serious bits in the collection, it is true, but even a geyser has its quiet periods, you know.

LINES TO LITERARY LIGHTS AND DRAMATIC STARS

'I've Heard nonsense,' said the Red Queen, 'compared with which this would be as sensible as a Dictionary!'

20–5–'05.

Dear Mrs. Riggs
May I remind you of your kindness in promising to visit my Library on Monday next? Lunch at 1.30 *precisely.*
Yours sincerely
EDMUND GOSSE

To Edmund Gosse

(*From a Lady to a Gentleman who has reminded her that she is lunching with him on the* 21*st, at* 1.30)

The critic may forget the Book
He lately read with special zest;
The mother may forget the Babe
That's not yet weanéd from her breast.
It may be that the Mandarin
Can e'en forget the Sacred Joss;
But black as ink on Mem'ry's page
Is writ my lunch with Edmund Gosse.

K. D. R.

21 FIFTH AVE., *Nov.* 22 '07

To Kate D. Riggs —
It was a noble feed & a noble company, and you are a dear. Heaven bless you!
MARK

Answer

You write 'the feed was noble,'
Such tribute flatters me!
The 'company' you then extol
And there I quite agree;
And when you say that I'm 'a dear'
My head becomes so big
I'd almost quote you in the Times
If 'twere not '*infra dig.*'
But all these foolish feelings fly,
As leaves in autumn fall,

For 'Heaven bless you' ends your note,
And that's the best of all.
The note itself I think I have
Preserved so it will keep;
I glazed it first with paraffine,
A couple of inches deep,
And then I put it in a box
Completely filled with rags,
And stuffed it round with cedar chips
And smelly camphor bags.
So, when posterity unearths
Your letter from the dark,
Where it has slept a hundred years,
They'll know you signed it
'Mark.'

K. D. R.

To H. G. Wells

(*With a Shilling*)

Mr. H. G. Wells was my neighbor at the Author's dinner, London, 1909. He took me for the author of 'Mrs. Wiggs,' but redeemed himself by lending me a shilling for carbonic water. I wrote these lines in a copy of 'Rebecca' and sent him next morning. K. D. R.

My dear Mr. Wells, do I owe you a shilling?
It may be yet more, but I vow I'm unwilling
To pay you your debt, since the slight obligation
Produces between us a closer relation.

I send you this book, with the hope small and faint,
That you will respond to my passionate plaint
For a copy of 'Kipps,' with your name on the leaf.
(My love for that creature is quite past belief!)

Some hours have passed and perhaps you're unable
To call up the name of your neighbor at table:

She rhymes *with* but is *not* the famed 'Mrs. Wiggs,'
She is Kate Douglas Wiggin who married a Riggs.

K. D. R.

To Laurence Hutton

(*With a copy of 'Nine Love Songs and a Carol'*)

I send this book to one made up
  Of worth and mirth and every good;
But when Dame Nature mixed the clay,
  She was not in a singing mood.

And, therefore, when you touch the lute,
  Or lift your voice in hymn of praise,
And turn for Hutton's grateful word,
  You find him going other ways.

Perchance the harp-strings, or the pipes,
  Might please his Scottish fancy more,
But all the instruments I've tried
  Have sent him swiftly towards the door.

He'll never hear these songs of mine,
  (Not if he sees the singer first,)
He'll fly their sweet inspired strains,
  As if they were a thing accurs'd.

All this is sad, for when he joins
  That choir where he must later be,
Th' unpractised hand on heavenly harp
  Will twang most unmelodious*lee*

And when he's forced to do his share
  With seraphim and cherubim,
My errant fancy pictures now
  The awful bore 'twill be to him!

K. D. R.

To Gertrude Elliott [1] *(Lady Forbes Robertson)*
(With a Cat of Lemon Sherbet)

This is the cat that Cleopatra lost
When journy'ing from her palace to the Sphinx;
At least she *said* she lost it, but, in sooth,
A fib was not unpleasing to the minx!
I search'd the caterers' counters through and through
For emblems suitable to Cæsar's state,
But Romans, they assured me, 'would not sell' —
Manhattan thought them sadly 'out of date.'
'We aint,' they said, 'got nothink in a freezer
The which it would apply to Julius Cæsar!'
And when I found this selfsame tiny cat,
They answered (for I thought the mould too small),
'Lady, you'd better take a three-pint cat,
Or otherwise you'll get no cat at all!'

K. D. R.

Read at one of Mrs. Hutton's Birthday Dinners (New York)

Birthday Toasts
to
Mrs. Laurence Hutton

I

G. C. R.'s Toast

I toast the mistress of the feast!
Her sparkling eyes and raven tresses!
Rare bird! Pink pearl of all her kind! —
A woman who her age confesses!

G. C. R.

[1] Then playing in *Cæsar and Cleopatra.*

II

K. D. R.'s Toast

The reason why she tells her age
And blazons it on every banner
And stamps it on your mem'ry's page
In such a highly virtuous manner, —

Is not because that in her sex
Such truth is bold and unexpected,
It's not a bit because she fears
That anyway we might suspect it,

It's not because from Scottish spouse
She's learned to be so 'gey an' thrifty,'
That charms she owned at twenty-five
Are still in good repair at fifty.

No: praise her candor if you will,
She *knows* that while it gains her glory,
Unless she brings the Bible out
We never can believe her story!

Grim Time! As gently deal with us
Assembled here at Nellie's dinner;
Preserve our teeth like Nellie's teeth,
Like hers, our hair from growing thinner!

But bald, blind, toothless, faded, grey,
One thought sustains, one faith we hold —
Those who love *us* are always young,
Those whom we love are never old.

K. D. R.

To E. J. K.

With a Photograph

(Bachelor because of Me)

You've never asked my picture;
But well I know how shy
You are, and how discreet, —
You'd really rather die!

So here, all unsolicited,
Is that fair fatal face
That's kept you still a bachelor
Unto this day of grace.

Had I been free! — but why do I
Those days of pow'r recall?
A woman's never really free,
Since she can't marry all!

K. D. R.

Dinner Rhymes

To S. L. Clemens

(With masks of Comedy and Tragedy)

The most of us can manage just
In scrambling through this vale of tears
To make what others call our 'mark,'
And salt it down with hopes and fears.
Then comes along a chap who does,
With ease, what we have done in pain;
He makes, at first, one shining mark,
And then, by George! he makes 'Mark Twain.'

K. D. R.

To Mrs. Clemens

(*With a Cross and a Crown*)

The wife of a genius knows all about crosses,
Her life's full of gains, but it also has losses;
To act her part well is worth while, when she learns it,
And as for her crown, — Well, I'm sure that she earns it!

K. D. R.

To T. B. Reed

(*With a Gavel and Coat of Arms of the State of Maine*)

Ye seers who mysteries unravel
Explain why he laid down his gavel!
He made with it an awful racket, —
In keeping order, — did he crack it?
It doesn't seem to make the noise
It used to, when *he* bossed the 'boys,'
And those to whom the Speaker's spoken
Declare it's not the '*Reed*' that's broken.

K. D. R.

Good-bye to Wolcott Balestier, who left the editorship of 'Time' and went to London

It might be written on his bier,
Here lies a man named Balestier.
He made time fly, as many knew,
And then alas! from 'Time' he flew.

K. D. R.

To W. H. G.

(*Vocalist and Female Impersonator*)

Fountain polyphonous, of melodious song,
Waker of mirth, infinitesimal,
Songstress isochronous of sweet-voiced sound,
Ebony charmer hypocritical;

Why dost thou doff thine ancient coat of *male*'
With dusky lines and angles geometrical,
And take from us our own peculiar garb,
Thou inky Hebe, most pragmatical?
Wheezer cacophonous of harmonious notes,
Radiant nymph, of source heliacal;
Who canst all foreign characters assume
And show in each a cryptic charm perennial;
Thou art more coyly lovely, hyperbolic sweet,
Adorned with maiden-arts, all hypothetical,
Than e'er thou wert in hypostatic guise,
Thou migniard lark, meticulous and mimical!

K. D. W.

To Mr. and Mrs. Frederic P. Vinton

(*With a Photograph*)

Pray look at me early
And look at me late.

Please look at me often
And think 'That is Kate.'

Don't look as a critic
And cry 'What a nose!

Good Heavens! that neck!'
And 'Great Jove! what a pose!'

But look at me humanly,
Kindly, you know,

And say 'That is Kate,
And we love her just so!'

To ——

(*With a Wreath of Roses*)

Each leaf enfolds a message,
Could you but read it plain;
The same old friendly greeting
I send you once again.
And had the wreath a thousand leaves
And every leaf a mate,
They could not carry half the love
They bring to you from

Kate

Lines to an Eminent Critic

(*Who Praised Penelope*)

I am as pleased as child with toy,
Or Bible hills that skip with joy;
My other books let Time destroy,
You praised 'Penelope'!

Whene'er my heart is bowed with grief,
When nothing else will give relief,
'Twill be my consolation chief,
You praised 'Penelope'!

Let the round world my fame allow;
Bring camera to take me now,
Bind laurel on my throbbing brow,
You praised 'Penelope'!

K. D. R.

To ——

(*With a Tiny Caddy of China tea*)

The shopkeeper says this is 'Emperor's Tea,'
The finest of blossoms of fine 'Bohee,'

Grown in the gardens of old Chin*ee;*
But when he repeated this story to me,
I murmured quite audibly 'Fiddle-de-dee!'
Still, test it yourself at your first par*tee*,
And note if the ladies remark, 'Tee-hee!'
You may know in that way, as you readily see,
If *they* think it is truly an Emperor's tea.

K. D. W.

The Law of Compensation

'The movements of men are most certainly queer,'
Sighed Dolly, who'd only been married a year;
'When lovers they always till one o'clock stay,
And when they are husbands, till one stay away!'
'Most trying,' said Belle, 'but we have no redress;
'Tis the law that they call compensation, I guess.'

K. D. W.

River Rhymes

(K. D. R. and G. C. R. took a rowing trip on the Thames, stopping successively at Datchett, Putney, Goring, Staines, Cookham, Medmenham Abbey, Reading, and Sonning. The following nonsense verses commemorated the journey.)

'Throw an egg to me, dear, and I'll catch it,'
Said a rat to a hen once at Datchett.
'I thank you, good sir,
But I greatly prefer
To sit on it here till I hatch it.'

K. D. R.

She said, 'Shall we row on to Reading?'
Said he, 'That's the way I am heading;
And if you'll agree
To say "Yes" to my plea,
We'll put in to shore for the wedding.'

K. D. R.

A man tore his coat once at Datchett,
And offered his waistcoat to patch it.
  The tailor refused,
  Saying, 'I'll be excused
From mending the thing till I match it.'

K. D. R.

A crazy old genius of Sonning
Invented a tower for conning;
  Then climbed to the top,
  And fell down with a flop, —
This dizzy old genius of Sonning.

K. D. R.

Few hairs had the Vicar of Medmenham;
Few hairs, and he still was a-sheddin' 'em;
  But had none remained,
  He would not have complained
Because there was far too much red in 'em.

K. D. R.

A clever young gambler of Cookham,
Who played cards with men for to rook 'em,
  Saw his error of ways;
  He now never plays;
He turned from his cards and forsook 'em.

G. C. R.

A crafty old miser of Goring
Discovered a gap in his flooring,
  Said he: 'I'll prepare
  This hole as a lair;
It's pretty good value for storing.'

G. C. R.

A flighty old woman of Staines,
While suffering terrible pains,
  Took a 'pick up' for colic,

Went off in a frolic:
She's now in the Bridewell in chains.
G. C. R.

There was a young curate of Medmenham
Whose piety early was bred in him.
He goes down to Texas;
A rancher he vexes: . . .
They're smelting him up for the lead in him!
G. C. R.

A good farmer's coat, up at Datchett,
Was sent to a tailor to patch it;
But the tailor's new cloth
Had been eaten by moth,
Till he couldn't tell just how to match it.
G. C. R.

A certain bon-vivant of Putney,
When offered some Indian Chutney
To eat with his lamb,
Said 'No!' with a d——n;
'This meat's altogether too mutt'ny!'
G. C. R.

Lament of the American on leaving Scotland

(*Tune: 'The Auld House'*)

I canna thole my ain toun,
Sin' I hae dwelt i' this,
To bide i' Edinboro' reek
Wad be the tap o' bliss.
My Douglas plaid aboot me hap,
The skirlin' pipes gae bring;
With thistles rare bind up my hair,
While I of Scotia sing.

The collops an' the cairngorms, —
The haggis an' the whin, —

The kilts, the Free and U. P. kirks,
The hairt convinced o' sin,
The parritch an' the heather-bell,
The snawdrop on the shaw,
The bit-lambs bleatin' on the braes,
How can I leave them a'!

I lo'e the gentry o' the North,
The Southern men I lo'e,
The people o' the canty West,
The 'Paisley buddies' too.
The pawky fowk o' Fife are dear,
Sae dear are ane an' a,
That e'en to think that we maun pairt,
Maist braks my hairt in twa.

Sae bring me tartans, bonnets, scones
And dye my tresses red;
I'd deck me, like 'th' unconquere'd Scots,
Wha hae wi' Wallace bled!'
And bind my claymore to my side,
Where close at hand 'twill be;
For Scotland's wrongs and Scotland's songs,
I'll lay me doun an' dee.

K. D. R.

Gratitude

I laid a sixpence on the plate
And meekly raised my eyes
Thankful my weekly rent was paid
For mansions in the skies.

K. D. R.

Penitential Problem

She would not love in Lent;
For she was abstinent
  And made a vow.
When Easter morning came
She found she had — (Oh, shame!)
  Forgotten how!

When one has had no dish
Save only eggs or fish
  From which to eat,
One loses, after years
(I speak of it with tears!)
  The taste for meat!

Not abstinence, but greed,
This is the lover's creed,
  He's ne'er content.
However great the store,
He hungers yet for more,
  Love knows no Lent.

K. D. R.

To ——

A Valentine

I know a maiden fair and calm,
  Whose tender lustrous eyes
Make, when I meet their earnest gaze,
  Good thoughts within me rise.

And if all silver grew her hair,
  Or faded were her face,
She would not look to me less fair
  Nor lack a single grace.

Or if I were a little child,
With childhood's timid trust,
I think my heart would fly to her
And love — because it must!

And if I were an earnest man
With empty heart and life,
I think (nor ever change my mind)
She'd be my chosen wife!

K. D. R.

The Point of View

Small Boy: loquitur

'You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,
To-morrow'll be the gladdest day of all the glad old year;
For when to-morrow's sunset gilds the grey November sky
I'll be as full of turkey as I can be and not die!'

Small Turkey: loquitur

'Let me sleep till late to-morrow,' said a Turkey to her Ma,
'For I shall be an orphan then, bereft of you and Pa;
And while I'm roosting drearily, without a dam or sire,
You will be roasting cheerily before the kitchen fire!'

K. D. W.

Misapprehension

I spied Phillida on her knees; a book of russet leather
She held, half hidden in her hand; I could not quite tell whether
Some touching story held her there, absorbed in her emotion,
Or whether I'd intruded on a moment of devotion.

'Sweet Saint!' I cried, 'I'll read with thee thy Bible every
morning!'
She turned, a look of wonder on her lovely features dawning, —
And then I saw the book was crammed, from cover through
to cover,
With pictures of my rival, who, I now know, was her lover.
'My Bible?' and her eyes took on a far-away and dim look,
'It's not my Bible, but,' she blushed, 'I own it is my *Him*
book!'

K. D. W.

To Mrs. Ida Norton

(*A charming ballad-singer*
With a bunch of mignonette)

A garden and a yellow wedge
Of sunshine slipping through,
And there, beside a bit of hedge,
Forget-me-nots so blue,
Bright four o'clocks and spicy pinks,
And sweet, old fashioned roses,
With daffodils and crocuses,
And other fragrant posies,
And in a corner, 'neath the shade
By flowering apple branches made,
Grew mignonette, —
Sweet mignonette!

Dear garden! planted long ago
When Love and I were young, —
I see thy blossoming nooks again,
I hear the bird that sung
Its morning song of ecstasy
Upon the flowering bough.

From out the half-forgotten past
It thrills me, even now,
As when with child-grief unconfessed,
A tear-stained cheek on thee I pressed, —
My mignonette, —
Sweet mignonette!

I do not know, I cannot say
Why, when I hear thee sing,
Those by-gone days come back to me,
And in their long train bring
To mind that dear old garden, with
Its hovering honey-bees,
And liquid-throated songsters on
The blossom-laden trees;
Nor why a fragrance, fresh and rare,
Should on a sudden fill the air,
Of mignonette, —
Sweet mignonette.

But so it is! I close my eyes
And dream that I'm alone; —
Thy charming presence vanishes,
The rustling crowd is gone,
The tinkling tones of instruments
In thin air melt away, —
Thy lovely voice falls on my ear
In ballad, grave or gay,
As fell the bird's voice in old years,
When I had moistened thee with tears,
My mignonette, —
Sweet mignonette.

Thy mem'ry seems a garden fair
Of old-time flowers of song.

There Annie Laurie lives and loves
  And Mary Morison,
And Black-eyed Susan, Alice Grey,
  Phillida, with her frown, —
And Barbara Allen, false and fair,
  From famous Scarlett Town.
What marvel such a garland rare
Should breathe sweet odors on the air,
    Like mignonette, —
    My mignonette?

Farewell, sweet thrilling voice! thou'lt fall
  On other listening ears,
And other brimming eyes will yield
  Their mute applause of tears;
And when those dear, familiar songs,
  So old, yet ever new,
With all their well remembered words,
  So tender and so true,
Move other hearts to hold thee dear
As we have ever held thee here, —
    Pray don't forget
    My mignonette!

K. D. W.

CHAPTER XIII

'THE DEAR FIRST BOOK'

'First Love,' 'first born,' 'first fruits,' 'first hand,' these phrases are on every lip and spoken always with conviction of their importance. The instances in which one's last love bulks larger in one's life than any that preceded it, and one's last born seems to be a more successful experiment than one's first — these are but exceptions to the general rule, which ordains that first sensations are too vivid to be repeated in kind.

K. D. W.

THUS wrote Kate Douglas Wiggin of 'The Birds' Christmas Carol,' her first regularly published book, written in 1886, privately printed in that year, bound in paper covers, and sold for the benefit of the Silver Street Kindergartens in San Francisco. In a long-ago interview,[1] which has never been reprinted, she tells the story of the coming of this Christmas Child better than any one could do it for her.

My advent into print, she writes, was not a book, but a three-part story,[2] accepted by the 'St. Nicholas Magazine' and paid for (mirabile dictu!) to the extent of one hundred and fifty dollars. I was seventeen, and why I did not consider myself a full-

[1] *New York Times*, October 13, 1912.
[2] 'Half-a-Dozen Housekeepers.'

fledged author, embarked upon a successful career, I can hardly tell, but a period of common sense overtook me with considerable severity. I examined myself and, though I discovered an intense desire to write, I discovered nothing to write about. I had neither knowledge nor experience, nor yet the genius which supplies at a pinch the place of both, so, somewhat regretfully, I turned my back on Literature (the Muse showing a most unflattering indifference) and took a peep into Life. All my instincts led me toward work with children, so I studied educational methods for a year and a half, finishing with a course of kindergarten theory and practice. Then most unexpectedly I found myself in the position of organizing the first free kindergarten work west of the Rocky Mountains, my sphere of effort being a precinct in San Francisco known as 'Tar Flat.' This is not the place to describe that experiment, which, under favoring circumstances, took root, blossomed, and bore fruit all up and down the Pacific Coast. Suffice it to say, I was too busy with living to think of writing. I was helping, in my woman's way (I fear at first it was but a girl's way), to do my share of the world's work, and it absorbed all my energies of body, mind, and soul, but though the public was generous, there was never money enough! Fifty children under school age, between four and six years, were enrolled, but the procession of waiting mothers daily grew longer. Patrick's mother, Henri's, Levi's, Angelo's, Leo's, Katrina's, Selma's, Alexandrina's, stood outside the door asking when there would be room for more children.

On a certain October day, I wondered to myself if I could write a story, publish it in paper covers, and sell it here and there for a modest price, the profits

to help toward the establishment of a second kindergarten. Preparations for Christmas were already in the air, and as I sat down at my desk in a holiday spirit I wrote in a few days my real first book, 'The Birds' Christmas Carol.' It was the simplest of all possible simple tales: the record of a lame child's life; a child born on Christmas Day, and named Carol by Mr. and Mrs. Bird, her father and mother. The Dark Ages in which I wrote were full of literary Herods, who put to death all the young children in their vicinity, and I was no exception, with my fragile little heroine. What saved me finally was a rudimentary sense of humor that flourished even in the life I was living, a life in which I saw pain, cruelty and wickedness, struggling against the powers for good that lifted their heads here and there, battling courageously and often overcoming. If Carol Bird and her family were inclined to sentimentality (as I have reason to fear), the Ruggles brood, who lived 'in the rear' were perhaps a wholesome antidote. Mrs. Ruggles and the nine big, middle-sized, and little Ruggleses who inhabited a small house in an alley that backed the Bird mansion — these furnished a study in contrasts, and gave a certain amount of fun to counteract my somewhat juvenile tendency to tears.

All this was more than a quarter of a century ago. How could one suppose that the unpretentious tale would endure through the lapse of years? Yet lately it appeared again in a brave, new dress, with illuminated borders to its pages, and richly colored illustrations, properly grateful, I hope, but never scornful of the paper covers in which it was born.

I have just written a preface to that new edition, a preface in which I have addressed, not the public,

but the book itself, which has grown through the passage of time to possess a kind of entity of its own.

'To My Dear First Book,' so I begin, 'Here you are on my desk again after twenty-eight years, in which you have worn out your plates several times, and so, richly earned your fine new attire.

'When you and I began our literary life together, I was young, taking my first timid steps into an unknown land, and you were the fragile staff on which I leaned.

'Youth lies behind me in a golden haze, but the wonder of life is still there, and the afterglow is no less beautiful than the dawn to the traveler who loves every mile of the road.

'You have been a good friend to me, my book — none better! It was you who "eased my shoulder from the burden," you who "delivered my hands from making the pots." At the very first, you earned the wherewithal to take a group of children out of the confusion and dangers of squalid streets, and transport them into a place of sunshine, safety, and gladness. Then you took my hand and led me into the bigger, crowded world where the public lives. You brought me all the new, strange experiences that are so thrilling to the neophyte. The very sight of your familiar title brings them back afresh. Proof-sheets in galleys, of which one prated learnedly to one's awe-stricken family; then the Thing itself, in covers, and as one opened them tremblingly, in secret, there pounced from the text some clumsy phrase one never noted before in all one's weary quest for errors. Then reviews, mingling praise and blame; then letters from strangers; then, years after, the story smiling at one cheerily, pathetically, gratefully, from patient rows of raised

letters printed for blind eyes; then, finally, the sight of it translated into many foreign tongues.

'Would that I had had more art — even at the expense of having had less heart — with which to endow you, but I gave you all of both I had to give, and one can do no more. In return you have repaid me in ways tangible and intangible, ways most rare and beautiful, even to bringing me friendships in strange lands where people have welcomed me for your sake. Then go, little book, on your last journey into the world. Here are my thanks, good comrade, and here my blessing. Hail and farewell!'

Does all this have too sentimental a ring? I hope not, but at any rate, one always has a bit of license where a first love or a first book are concerned, particularly if the first love, or the first book have lasted over the silver wedding day.

K. D. W.

My sister was no novice in literature, even when the 'Birds' Christmas Carol' began its loved and loving career, for 'The Story of Patsy' had already been written and sold privately for the benefit of the same kindergarten; 'Half-a-Dozen Housekeepers,' the 'St. Nicholas' serial, had appeared; the novelette, 'Love by Express' had been completed, although laid away and half-forgotten, and two or three brief stories and sketches had been printed in the Santa Barbara newspapers. Still, a book, a real book with real covers, real publishers and real royalties, had never yet appeared, and, there-

fore, the 'Birds' Christmas Carol' may well be held as the first of its line, the first among those volumes which their author longed to 'have children love, read twice, and tuck under their pillows at night.'

My sister had not taken very seriously the writing which preceded the 'Carol,' and, indeed, the Kindergarten, writ large, was her first thought for ten absorbed and impassioned years. Her attitude toward her earliest literary bantling is well shown in a letter written to me, in Mexico, in 1878.

'How about St. Nicholas?' she writes. 'Do you have it, or shall I send my story? It has run three numbers and is finished this month (January). It really reads very well and I'm quite surprised at some of its good points, having entirely forgotten half of what I had written. I wish I could sit down and write another, but oh, dear, my head and hands are so full of work — it's impossible to put another thing in!'

The success of the 'Birds' Christmas Carol' was immediate — not a temporary success, not a flash-in-the-pan, but a long, heart-warming success, one that every author sighs for — a success that brings notes and letters and tributes of affection and appreciation from young and old, from East and West. The mingled pathos and humor of the little book appealed to

parents and guardians, as well as to children, and if Carol and the Ruggles family are familiar friends in the seven hundred and fifty thousand households where the English version has already entered, to how many must they be familiar through the play, through the French, German, Swedish, and Japanese translations, and through the copies issued in raised letters for the blind!

The late Hamilton W. Mabie, when introducing my sister on one occasion as the speaker at an annual meeting of the New York Kindergarten Association, called her 'The Lady with the Golden Key,' and his introduction was so tender and so poetic, so what every one who loved her and her work would like to have said, that it seems appropriate to quote it here:

> There is a fair country to the east,[1] said Mr. Mabie, where the morning sun always shines clear and bright, and on which the mellow splendor and pathetic shadows of afternoon never rest. There, at the Gates of Day, the birds are always singing; there the shouts of children are always heard. There the great adventure of life begins, in dreams that are later to become art, and in plays which the joy of the hour floods with happiness and on which rests the prophecy of the future. There is the fair country of the Phaiacians, which Homer loved, and the Garden of the Hesperides, where the unplucked fruit hangs always ripe and golden. There the

[1] January 11, 1911.

fairies are always dancing to silent tunes in the moonlight, and there the witches are always weaving their enchantments in the darkness. There are the brave heroes putting on their armor and taking their swords or their slings, swift to succor; and there are the terrifying giants, so appalling as you look at them; so pitifully weak as you thrust the sword of truth into them. There lies the sleeping Princess, wrapped in dreams, within the hedge of thorns; and there is the Prince, who cares nothing for hurts and bruises so long as he can make his way and awaken her with a kiss; and then 'through all the world she follows him.' There are the story-tellers, the wise philosophers who know that life is not a futility, but a dramatic tale; and they are always telling the Wonder Story in a thousand forms; there are the little poets, hearing in their hearts the music of the future; and there is the Madonna with the Child in her arms, the divine looking up with loving and smiling eyes to the human; the beautiful and miraculous parable! There is the song of the angels, and there lives that dear saint whose path shines in all the homes of the world at Christmas-tide. There abide Faith, Love, Poetry — the final realities of life. And they that live there, coming, they know not whence, pass out of the Western gate, leaving innocence behind, in the hope that out of the work, sorrow, joy and temptation of the world they may achieve virtue. And there are a few who remember and never grow old; the poets, the painters, the mothers, the great teachers! Through the Western gate we all come; for 'emigravit' is the word written for us all. But to some a golden key is given, and they go back to that country at will and see the children playing the old games and hear the

old voices, the old shouts, the old songs, and share the old secrets.

We have come here to-day, not to honor — that is unnecessary — but to express our affection for and our obligation to our Lady of the Golden Key. She has never been far from the country of childhood; teaching children in San Francisco, speaking for them in New York and in every part of the country through a series of charming, natural and affecting stories. She has made herself an interpreter of childhood through all forms of literature. In the Luxembourg there is a charming picture of a little Maine village asleep in the moonlight, with a quiet stream flowing through the heart of it. What Mr. Ben Foster has done with the brush, our Lady of the Golden Key has done in her stories; she has given us the familiar and beautiful background of the New England farm and village, she has set a flock of charming children in our midst, and has held the kingdom of childhood open to a multitude of people.

There is something in literature diametrically opposed to all agricultural processes. When a farmer plants a seed of corn, he is morally certain that corn will come up — that is, if anything comes up at all. When an author plants a story, however, supposing it holds within it a real, life-giving germ, it is likely to sprout anywhere, at any time, and under new forms, never for a moment imagined by their original creator. When Cadmus sowed the dragon's teeth, he was convinced probably, that they would

come up armed warriors, but had Cadmus been a literary man, he would have had no such inward assurance.

No one was more surprised than my sister when the 'Ruggleses-in-the-Rear' became a dramatic reading all over this country, and when Mr. George Riddle added Mrs. Ruggles to his delightful impersonations. The 'Ruggleses' Dinner Party,' lately called by an eminent critic[1] 'one of the two most beloved Christmas dinners in English literature,' Kate had always read in public herself with great effect, read it, indeed, to the end of her days, but it need hardly be said that she had never supposed that the eminent historian, John Fiske, would deign to take the part of Mrs. Ruggles at a Christmas Party, nor that nine Harvard Professors would consent to act as his offspring.

The book, in the course of a few years, became so popular a vehicle for amateur actors, and the dramatic versions sent for approval to K. D. W. were often so repugnant to her taste, that she resolved to dramatize it herself, and with the assistance of Miss Helen Ingersoll, a playwright of experience, she issued the story in dramatic form in 1914.[2] It won immediate success and has been played in sixty-four towns

[1] May Lamberton Becker.
[2] Houghton Mifflin Company.

THE RUGGLES FAMILY IN THE BOOK

THE RUGGLES FAMILY IN CHINA

of the United States during the past year (1924), as well as in China by the pupils of a mission school, and in various other foreign lands, from which she has received letters of ardent thanks (though never any ardent royalties!).

It has remained a favorite vehicle for dramatic expression in our American schools, and in 1915 K. D. W. gave it a little Preface for this purpose, addressing it as follows:

4 PARK STREET, BOSTON
January, 1915

To my Friends among Supervisors and Teachers in Elementary Schools:

When I was making my dramatic version of 'The Birds' Christmas Carol,' I had in mind first, the needs of professional and amateur actors; second, the wish to give the readers of the old book added information about the Birds and the Ruggleses; and third, the desire to provide a diverting exercise in school reading. That the Carol in its old form has entered into school-life for thirty odd years makes me hope that in its newest guise it may acquire fresh value.

I thought what pleasure it might give to all concerned if a sufficient number of copies of the paper-covered edition could be purchased to let the children read the play instead of acting it. Two pupils could easily read from one book and the parts could be assigned just as if acting, not reading, were to be done.

The prologue could be omitted, or read by the

teacher first, to 'set the scene,' as it were. Then the children could be grouped near the desk, on the floor of the school-room or on the stage, or platform of the assembly room, and when the parts had been run through once or twice by way of rehearsal the young readers would be giving a really enjoyable performance to the assembled pupils. Each character could read his own stage business, (printed in italics in parentheses) or it could ordinarily be left to the imagination. When time is limited a single scene might be taken, say the Ruggleses' preparation for the Christmas dinner at the Bird house. With a word of explanation this will stand by itself. It simply has to be read rapidly and with humor, and I know of no better exercise in natural, vivacious, flexible reading than a scene like this which *cannot* be read in a wooden, mechanical or artificial manner. The necessity of following question quickly with answer; of retort provoking retort; above all of unconscious characterization — all this gives a spirit to play-reading that can be gained in no other way.

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

In the years of its existence, hundreds of babies have been named for 'Carol,' and as their successive birthdays have rolled around, their fond parents have sent flowers to my sister and written her notes of gratitude for the loving spirit that seemed to have descended with the name upon their own especial 'Carols.' One father always bought each book by K. D. W. as it appeared and sent it to the author, begging that it be autographed for his

baby girl's collection. When the complete 'Quillcote Edition' came out, he was the first on the list to enter his order and his birthday flowers never failed, but, alas! for his little Carol, when we returned from a drive one New York winter day, my sister found a telegram upon her desk. She opened it and turned to me with quickly brimming eyes, for there upon the yellow sheet we saw the name of the well-known Western town and the simple message, '*Carol has gone to join the angel choir.*'

The 'Carol Clubs' dot the country from Maine to California and for years their requests have come pouring in for a photograph, or a letter, or some souvenir of the author of their beloved volume. Every year, as the Christmas season rolls around, some mention of the 'dear first book' appears, and only this winter (1924–25) a new admirer comes upon the scene who says with charming fervor and sincerity:

For years and years I refused to read this story when besought, under the impression that it was of a lame little girl, who at Christmas-time fed birds that in return carolled to her. But last night I read it — not with regret that I had not read it before, but with a wonder that Providence could have held such a good thing in reserve for me until I was ripe for it. I pity him who can read the story without tears, or lay it down without feeling the better for having read it. I do not say it is one of the best

Christmas stories ever written, I say, hands down, it is the very best.

Armando Palacio Valdes writes, in 'The Novel of a Novelist,' 'I should like to end my life making the old folks think and remember, and amusing all the little ones.'

It is thirty-nine years since Kate Douglas Wiggin wrote the 'Birds' Christmas Carol,' and the magic spell that brings joy to the little people and memory to the old folk still seems to cling about the 'dear first book,' and about its child-heroine, who, 'like Jackanapes and Little Nell, should be the dream-friend of every English-speaking child.'[1]

[1] Sara Cone Bryant.

CHAPTER XIV

EVERYBODY'S CHILDREN

A DELIGHTFUL Western critic, one of the kind whose praise every writer longs to win, wrote one day of a new book of my sister's: 'One of the dearest, quaintest, and most lovable of the blessed family of everybody's children has just been added to that joyous circle by Kate Douglas Wiggin.'

'The blessed family of everybody's children!' — it is a charming phrase, and the woman who has been privileged to add to its number may well count herself fortunate. My sister's work concerned itself from the very beginning with young people, you know, for there were the group of girls in 'Half-a-Dozen Housekeepers' and the two tricksy youngsters in 'Love by Express,' while 'The Story of Patsy' held a complete child-portrait, the first she ever painted.

Written in 1882, the book was privately printed and three thousand copies were sold for charitable purposes before it appeared in 1889, under the imprint of Houghton Mifflin Company.

It was distinctly 'a story with a purpose,' but

the purpose lay outside the story and was but a means to an end.

My aim, says the author, was a direct and practical one, that of raising money for my waifs in San Francisco, and the book was the only way in which I could do it, so, you see, it hardly comes within the accepted significance of the term 'story with a purpose.' Something of my philanthropic intention crept into the tale, of course, but, at the same time, I would as readily have organized a charity bazaar if that had been possible. If I had failed, I should probably have continued my work for the children of the poor, but I succeeded. The Voice made itself heard for the first time, and I had to follow it as best I could. My literary career began in the public response to 'The Story of Patsy,' not in its success in earning money for a good cause.

Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett says of these early books:

When a giver [as she always called my sister] reveals the power to write stories, there must inevitably be set free in the world a flight of birds to whose songs one stands and listens — and passing on one's way does not forget. Kate Douglas Wiggin brought the buoyant soul and she chose — or Life chose for her — that she should set free the flight of birds which have flown far and wide to strange countries as well as to home forests and playgrounds, singing as they went and wheresoever they rested. They have always sung, and what one has always heard in their singing has been the note of the buoyant soul and the giver of gifts. They are stories of children, or of very young things, at least.

The first and simplest ones were written merely as the generous effort of a girl to add to the limited resources of a free kindergarten for San Francisco street children. The later stories were the inevitable result of the first. Such a fountain having begun to flow must continue and throw higher into the air its dance and sparkle of spray.

Little crippled Patsy —

'The puir doited loonie, the mitherless bairn' —

was but a broken-wing'd bird, it is true, but it may be that his song was all the sweeter for his suffering.

One of our National Commissioners of Education remarked, in a report of years ago, that the book had been a real contribution to the kindergarten cause, as potent a tract as was ever issued in the influence it had exerted and the converts it had made.

How many enthusiastic maidens, burning to help in the work of the world, studied kindergarten because of that one little song-sermon we cannot know, but in my own time not a few have given me their testimony to that effect, and how many students in training have turned to me, after a particularly happy morning, quoting, with moist eyes and a choke in the throat, 'Oh, why should one ever want to be an angel when one can be a kindergartner?'

So 'Miss Kate' of the story exclaimed in

'Patsy,' and that the real Miss Kate so felt is apparent in its every line.

Standing on 'that Silver Street corner that everybody loved, she felt the daily throb of her people's need and they could feel the throb of her sympathy.' Many a devoted teacher has felt a like throb and answered it with all her heart, but it has not been given to every one to put the answer into a song to which the world will listen. Crude and immature as its author felt the book to be, in after years, it yet held a spark that kindled many a fire for the warming of little children.

For 'Timothy's Quest' I should feel and do feel an especial fondness, dating from the hour when I first saw, facing me on the dedication page of the scarlet and green volume:

To
Nora

Dearest sister, sternest critic
best friend

At the birth of faithful 'Timothy' and enchanting 'Lady Gay,' two of the dearest members of the 'blessed family of everybody's children,' I was not present, and I find that the first half of the book was written during a visit to Hollis, Maine, and then laid aside by my sister

for a time, during a period of great sorrow and subsequent illness.

The manuscript was left behind with Houghton Mifflin Company in Boston, when its author made her first journey to Europe in 1890, her idea being, no doubt, that its characters and incidents were so imprinted upon her mind that nothing could erase them. The following letter, written to me in San Francisco, indicates her misery when, on sitting down in England to finish the book, she found that the fountain of her inspiration was completely sealed:

STRATFORD-ON-AVON — *July* 25

DEAREST NORA:

Just a word to-night, for I'm in a state of too dark despair for letters. My travelling companions have gone to London to visit friends, but I seem to be no better off for my solitude. We left Chester Wednesday noon, went to Warwick, saw the Castle, *hated* the Bowling Green Inn and couldn't get lodgings anywhere. We drove with all our luggage from Warwick to Stratford, passing through several villages, Sherbourne, Hampton Lucy, Snitterfield, but couldn't get accommodations in any of them. I was so wild with headache by that time, that we couldn't look here, in Stratford, so we went to the Shakespeare Inn for the first night.

Yesterday, Thursday morning, we went to Anne Hathaway's cottage at Shottery. I could get but one lodging there and that looked on a stable-yard, not Shakespeare's stable-yard, either, nor Anne

Hathaway's, nor Judith Shakespeare's, so I didn't take it! Finally in despair I engaged a sitting-room here at the Falcon Inn and had a cot put in a corner. It looks on the corner where Shakespeare died, just opposite, and on the other corner is the old Guild Chapel and Hall where strolling players acted and Shakespeare joined them. Down stairs is the old room where he came across for his pipe and his bowl of an evening, and there are ten 'old leather bottéls' hanging on the wall. That's the largest number in England. The charge is about three dollars a day (half for location and quarter for the 'leather bottéls'), the rest is for board and lodging. That's rather expensive, as I do nothing but sit and chew my pencil, and the cud of failure, alternately. I *cannot* write! I don't speak to a soul and sit in front of my paper for hours and can't even put a word down. I seem to be eternal leagues and centuries away from New England. My manuscript copy I cabled for hasn't got here yet. That's my last hope, but I don't believe I can do anything, though I shall try hard for a week and after that it will be too late and I shall have to give it up till next winter.

This morning I tried a new method. I hired a boy to row me across the Avon (very narrow here), for thrippence and leave me in a nook under a tree close by the water, where no one passed. I told the boy to come back in four hours. No good, not a word! I wanted you, my head ached dull and hard and my mind drifted and drifted like the river. I came back and cried with rage and disappointment and I know there will be the same programme to-morrow.

Good-night, darling sis.

Yours miserably

KATE

As it seems to be a human instinct to wail to one's family when in despair, but to omit sending any subsequent pæan of triumph should one ever be chanted, I have no record of the date when the fountain began to flow again, but that it finally took up its appointed task and threw its spray higher than it had ever done before is abundantly proved by the welcome accorded the little book.

Those were early days in authorship, and another letter written to a friend after the completion of the story shows that its writer was as yet very uncertain as to how her work might be received by the public.

PARIS, 9 RUE DE LOGELBACH
Sept. 11 [1]

. . . . . .

My new book, 'Timothy's Quest,' which I worked on in Stratford-on-Avon, will be out, I trust, the first of November, at latest. I am, as usual, in a nervous panic for fear it won't be liked and won't have a good holiday sale. Say a little prayer for its success!

Yours devotedly

KATE

In my sister's translation-case, 'Timothy's Quest' may be found in Swedish, Danish, Bohemian, and German, and it has always been an especial favorite in Great Britain. An auto-

[1] No year: the year was seldom in K. D. W.'s letters.

graphed copy, sent fifteen years after publication to Mr. W. S. Gilbert, brought the following response, which gave Timothy's author great and heart-warming pleasure:

GRIM'S DYKE, HARROW WEALD
27th Sept., 1905

DEAR MRS. WIGGIN, —

I have just read 'Timothy's Quest,' and I write to thank you for its humour, its pathos, and its lesson of true charity. I was especially charmed with Vilda's dream — a very beautiful allegory told in simple and direct words. I am sure you had tears in your eyes as you wrote it; I am not ashamed to admit that I had tears in mine as I read it.

Please forgive this intrusive letter, but when I read a book that comes home to me, I am too grateful to its author to remain altogether silent.

Believe me to be

Very truly yours

W. S. GILBERT

It may be of interest here to reprint what Kate Douglas Wiggin herself scribbled about this, one of her first stories, which I found on a scrap of paper in one of her notebooks.

On the shelf that holds the volumes that I have written during thirty years or more — not a long list, after all, considering the lapse of time — 'Timothy's Quest' occupies a little niche all its own.

People always ask authors which of their books they themselves like best. It is a difficult question to answer, and I never fall into the trap! I am also wise enough not to divulge which ones I like least,

though never a word in all the years have I written 'on order,' 'on time,' nor on a theme suggested by editor or publisher. Nevertheless, I own up to a secret fondness for 'Timothy's Quest,' for it was one of my earliest books and my first success in England.

I had no plot for the story, but I should never have been an author had I waited for a plot! I had simply a phrase set down in a notebook. A child in my San Francisco Kindergarten said to me, once: 'There's nothing to play with in Mrs. B.'s house. They need a baby there, dreadfully!' On going home I scribbled down a sentence: 'Do you need any babies here?' When it met my eyes again long afterwards I said to myself — 'Here is a story!'

There must be two orphan children, for the phrase must work to and fro between the babies who need the home and the home which needs the babies. There must be a boy of ten who has been in a Home with a capital 'H.' He longs for the other kind for himself and for three-year-old Gabrielle, the baby companion of his misfortunes. Learning that he is to be separated from her and again swallowed up by an Orphan Asylum, he steals out of the city slum with his beloved charge, and with his capital of two dollars and sixty-five cents embarks for the 'truly country' of the picture-books, where he may be able to find a home with a little 'h' and 'an adopted mother.'

Timothy's journey from a rural railway station through a quiet green little Maine village till he finds The White Farm, so exactly the home of his dreams; his cool reception, the gradual growth of the situation; the action and reaction of the two children and the two spinsters on one another; the old-maid love-story of Samanthy Ann Ripley; the

melting of Miss Vilda Cummins' heart, a heart hardened by the disgrace and death of her younger sister Martha — these go to make up the story.

'Timothy's Quest' was not the first of K. D. W.'s books to be produced upon the screen, but the first in which she was allowed to assist or to offer suggestions. 'Rebecca' and 'Rose o' the River' were both filmed in the Far West and she felt (no doubt authors always *do* feel) that she could have improved them greatly if she had been given an opportunity. With 'Timothy's Quest,' the Dirigo Film Company, of Portland, Maine, gave her a free hand, and her passion for perfection, so far as she was able to attain it, entered into every scene.

The settings for the story were all photographed in our especial corner of Maine, and K. D. W. entered into fellowship with all the actors and discussed the entire scenario with the managers. She wrote, herself, all of the screen-titles, and, as an old friend testified, 'You hear Kate's voice in every line of them.' As one critic wrote, 'The story comes to the screen singing a cheery song of love and faith; it jogs along through the New England country scenes like the old white horse whose name is not mentioned in the cast, but who contributes a friendly touch whenever he appears.'

So it 'jogged along' in our own land and across the water, and we even heard of it, still

'jogging,' in the land of the Boers and in Australia. Everywhere it brought a wholesome breath of pine-trees and blossoming clover, and to every one who had read the book its closing scenes recalled the last lovely lines of the story:

> And they remembered not past unhappiness, because of present joy; nor that the chill of coming winter was in the air, because it was summer in their hearts: and this is the eternal magic of love.

If the biographer of Kate Douglas Wiggin attempted to follow her into 'Good Children Street,' where, according to Eugene Field, all 'the dear little people live,' he would find that she was known in every house on both sides of the way and that every mother would look from the window and cry, 'Run, Johnny, run; run, Polly, run and meet her! There's the lady who told about you in her book!'

K. D. W. would have said, with Tennyson,

> '. . . Children — would they grew
> Like field-flowers everywhere!'

and in her books they seem, indeed, as many as the daisies and buttercups in a Maine hayfield. Of Timothy and Lady Gay, of Patsy, Carol and the Ruggleses, a word has already been written, but were I to sing of all the others — of Polly Oliver, Marm Lisa, Atlantic and Pacific Simonson, little Shaker Sue, Davy of the 'Village

Stradivarius,' 'Rod' of 'Waitstill Baxter,' Alcestis Crambry in 'Rose o' the River,' those Chickens of Mother Carey's, and Rebecca and Emma Jane the song would be a long one.

'Mother Carey's Chickens' was K. D. W.'s first attempt to paint a complete family circle and the showers of letters that descended upon her while the story was appearing as a serial in the 'Ladies' Home Journal,' the acclaim that followed the appearance of the book and the play seem to indicate that her picture was a lifelike one and true to the ideal.

When we were in counsel together over the 'Mother Carey' play, in which my sister had the assistance of Miss Rachel Crothers, she asked me to write her some verses on the motto, *Tibi splendet focus*, which was painted over the fireplace in the Yellow House at Beulah ('darling little Beulah, shiny-rivered Beulah!'); and as they have never been published, save in a now extinct magazine, I append them here:

Tibi splendet focus

(For you the hearth-fire glows)

Know'st thou a hearth-stone, warm and safe,
A hearth-fire burning bright,
Where housemates sit in sweet content,
Ring'd round with peace to-night?

Know'st thou a mother, star-like, set
In azure deeps of love;

Whose radiance dims all earthly lights,
  Clear-shining from above?

Hast never known them? In thine heart
  Still fair the vision lies
And thou canst close thine eyes and see
  The Isle of Paradise.

Remote or near, its fragrance breathes
  On every wind that blows,
And o'er the width of half the world
  For thee the hearth-fire glows!

Do you remember, you who have read the book, when, on the evening of the housewarming, Kathleen and Nancy, Gilbert and Julia, Mother Carey and Peter, bowed their heads and said, in chorus,

O Thou who dwellest in so many homes, possess Thyself of this. Thou who settest the solitary in families, bless the life that is sheltered here. Grant that trust and peace and comfort may abide within, and that love and light and usefulness may go out from this house forever.

Amen

Truly I believe that love and light and usefulness did go out from the book itself, from the 'Mother's Calendar' that was later made from its pages and from the simple family drama, which is still being performed here and there in America.

An early and refreshing comment upon the

play was sent in a letter from an unknown friend, who wrote:

I had seen two farces in Boston lately which made my visits to 'Mother Carey' particularly delightful. I saw the play four times in one week, and on each occasion I experienced the sort of radiant happiness I used to feel when I was a child, and my mother had washed and brushed me, put on a clean frock, and let me sit down on the garden steps to hear the birds sing.

A dramatic critic [1] wrote of it:

I have seen so much of the seamy side of humanity displayed upon the stage that I was surprised and delighted to witness last night the depiction of a sound, sane, healthy, wholesome, lovable woman.

The play was 'Mother Carey's Chickens'; the author, Kate Douglas Wiggin; the dramatis personæ, just a United States family.

It was a pleasing performance. The story was ingenious and simple. The lines were bright, unforced, and genuine; and there was nothing about it that smacked of the theatric art, good or bad.

It was just a slice of life.

There were Mother Carey and her children and the neighbors; and the author hadn't got one of 'em out of a book, but had seen every one with her own eyeballs and heard every one with her own eardrums.

But the outstanding part of the play was Mother Carey herself. She was a regular mother, not the kind you read about, but the kind you had, yourself. She wasn't sticky sweet, nor weepy; nor stern and

[1] Dr. Frank Crane.

rockbound in virtue, nor any of the other mother exaggerations we're used to in drama. She was just a regular mother — honest, handsome (in the mother style), brave, self-controlled, and affectionate.

She was just a pure, clean flame of womanhood, the kind every right-minded young man dreams of being the mother of his children.

The success of the play was a great delight to its author, and to its author's sister as well, from the time that we saw it in Portland, Maine, in a party to which all our Quillcote neighbors were invited, to that delightful evening in Cleveland, Ohio, when the Cleveland kindergartners took over the house and we sat in a box embowered in flowers, and, 'amang our ain fowk,' as it were, saw depicted the charming family circle, 'round and complete, with love and harmony between all its component parts.'

We believed then, and we believe now, that the little stormy petrels we saw that evening were, in very truth, 'The Birds of our Lady,' and that Mother Carey (Mater Cara) still sends them out to show the good birds the way home.

CHAPTER XV

LETTERS, TOASTS, AND BOOK-INSCRIPTIONS

'I have a letter from her
Of such contents as you will wonder at:
The mirth whereof so larded with my matter,
That neither singly can be manifested,
Without the show of both.'

IT was only this morning while I was dusting the Shakespeares that my eye lighted upon this passage from 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' and it seemed to me so pertinent to the chapter of K. D. W.'s life which I was considering, that I was moved to set it down at once. Gamaliel Bradford tells us — and who should know better — that there is a growing interest in the intimate revelations of diaries and letters, and that this represents a natural, sound, and most valuable instinct. 'There is nothing,' he adds, 'like personal literature, the direct, spontaneous record of men's and women's struggles and experiences to bring out the fundamental identity under the superficial difference.'

My sister was a charming and original letter-writer, as all her correspondents can testify, but, although she would have been willing at any moment to record her 'struggles and ex-

periences' so far as they related to the outer self, she was too thoroughly a daughter of New England to reveal the inner self, save as she unconsciously shadowed it forth in her books. In her letters will be found no outpourings of griefs, hardships, disappointments, or trials of the soul, though of these she had many in her time; but rather an irrepressible gayety of heart, an ever-fresh interest in men and things, and an abounding courage.

PARIS, *September 8th*, 1890 [1]

DEAR FAMILY:

I am surprised you think my letters interesting. I consider them unmitigated scrawls, stupid and incoherent, considering the amount of things one could tell about the country and the incidents along the road, but the trouble is, nobody, who hasn't the strength of a blacksmith can write while travelling at this pace. We are always finding our luggage, getting ready for table-d'hôte, looking up trains and trips and hotels, reading Baedeker, going to bed early and getting up to do the same thing again. We either have to write at night when we are completely tired out, in our rooms by a candle, or in the hotel salons with a hundred people jabbering. Altogether it's an impossibility. By the time you get a leisure moment to sit down and write, your impressions have faded and you are constantly thinking you'd better be mending your clothes, or reading up the history of the next place. I really didn't know enough to travel intelligently when I started and I doubt if I know much more, now the journey is over.

[1] First journey to Europe.

Geneva was a delightful place, though we thought it was going to be conventional and swarming with Americans. We stayed at the 'Hôtel Nationale,' a little out of town, in a beautiful garden with many trees, opening on Lake Geneva, which is like a great flashing sapphire. Anything so blue I never imagined. It makes the distant green mountains and Mont Blanc beyond, infinitely more beautiful, to look over this sheet of brilliant azure. There was a great deal of wind while we were there and we did not venture on the steamers, though our duty would have been to take an all-day trip to the Castle of Chillon at the other end. But we are long past doing our duty by the country now!

On one of the Swiss lakes in a driving storm we were all huddled disconsolately in the lounge of the steamer thinking how beautiful it would have been on deck if the sun had shone and we could have seen the lake itself or the surrounding mountains. An American couple sat beside me.

'George,' said the wife, who was reading Baedeker, 'there is a ruined castle here, somewhere, on one bank or the other of this lake, and I can't find it.'

George: 'Don't tell me if you do; if I should see another ruined castle, I couldn't eat my dinner!'

Another elderly man sat on the deck of a steamer as we were going from Interlaken to Berne. There was a canvas canopy over us, but it was drizzling drearily. He was in a bad humor because his wife and he had had a connubial difference. They had a little tray with coffee and rolls on the chair in front of them. He attempted to drink out of his saucer. She withered him with a glance and poured his coffee back into his cup. Frustrated in this, he stirred his coffee cheerfully, and then, putting his

thumb and finger around the spoon, took up the cup with the spoon in it and drank. When he set it down the wife took the spoon out and set it down hard in the saucer. When he drank again, he took the spoon, stirred the coffee composedly, and went through the same programme. So did the wife. I declare if he hadn't taken the cup in three gulps, she would have taken the spoon and beaten him with it. Presently he turned to me with, 'Ain't you an American? I thought so. Well, I'd ruther be a lamp-post in Philadelphia than the Emperor of Austria!'

Third, in a picture gallery in Brussels.

A man that looked as if he might have come from Saccarappa; — a dreadful wife with a purple dress, red bonnet, and yards of watch-chain; his hat on the back of his head and his hands in his pockets.

'See here,' said he to his wife, "Dutch School," "Flemish School" — I don't see no school! Now I've had 'bout enough of this! I'll set down on one of these round lounges and wait while you look at the pictures. Don't mind me, but take it all in, pet! That's what we come for?'

One afternoon at Geneva we took the diligence and drove ten miles to Coppet where the Neckers used to live (Madame de Staël's parents, you remember), and where 'Corinne' herself lived during her childhood and several years of her married life. The grounds are beautiful and the old château most interesting. We were shown the salon; her bedchamber and her daughter's; the veranda where she walked with the Schlegels and her crowd of famous men, and her upstairs study with her little grand piano and escritoire with a few manuscript pages of

'Corinne.' There were beautiful portraits of the whole family by famous artists. We drove home by Ferney — Voltaire's place — so it was a pleasant afternoon. Mont Blanc was only visible six hours or so in all, during three days, and it was just the same with the Jungfrau. When travellers pay at the rate of eight or ten dollars a day to see them, it seems as if they might stay on view an hour a day during the tourist season.

We have had struggles both with French and German at the stations and hotels. The long interval between my studies at the Berlitz School and any occasion for practice put me all out of the notion of speaking and I have not been able to do a thing. Miss P. is not a linguist. She knows only a few words, and her idea is that the sounds given to vowels and consonants on the Back Bay in Boston are good enough for any other trumpery language; so she pronounces on that plane. On getting into the train for Geneva from Berne we were told that it was direct — no change. After two hours we stopped at a station and everybody got out. Of course, we were nervous and began to ask questions which nobody understood. One train man said 'Yes,' and the next 'No,' and so on. Presently one half the train was uncoupled and we seemed to be in danger of remaining behind. Miss P. was tired of my makeshift French and took the helm. She dashed out on the platform with a Boston hold-all in her left hand and her red umbrella in her right. The latter article she used for purposes of gesticulation. The only trouble is that gestures relating to abstract sentiments and conditions are so liable to be misunderstood. Still they are a relief to the mind. You seem to be accomplishing something when you

claw the air with a red umbrella, while you are waiting for the right word.

Well, Miss P. dashed out and a nice gentleman was standing on the platform:

'Ah — ah — ah — Mosheer! Mosheer!' she cried. 'Ah — ah — Mosheer, ah — ah —' (Then with a burst of desperation) 'Changeay noose here poo Genayva?'

Nice Gentleman: 'I can't help you, Madame; I'm a foreigner myself and speak nothing but English!'

Tableau. I retired to the empty carriage and chortled with glee, and Miss P. joined me when she got over her first rage.

I will write you about my Paris home in a few days. Please give my dearest love to Dr. S. and tell her I'm never well when out of her reach. If you can find any letter of mine worth giving her to read, please do it.

Miss P. sends love to you and Nora. Where *is* Nora's picture?

Your loving, loving

KATE

I am not going to send out any letters for a month here, if at all, or go in for any gayeties. I'm going to study and nothing else. If I find I'm getting a great deal, I shall stay on till last of November.

K.

PARIS, *October 11th*, 1890

DEAR FAMILY:

To begin with, I shall certainly know something of 'high life' in Paris, for I not only live with a Marquise, but I live with her on the fifth floor, 'sans ascenseur.' Anything more sweetly idyllic, more

exquisitely sincere and simple, more virginally innocent than our life, you never imagined! If you know of any elderly gentleman of large fortune and failing health, who wishes to adopt legally and maintain in modest grandeur an American angel with a French polish on it, just let him intercept my carriage on the way from this house to the steamer and he will capture a perfect specimen! My room has an inlaid floor with rugs upon it. The walls are hung with old family portraits. The little rosewood bed has curtains of pale green and white muslin, indescribably spring-like and inappropriate for a lady in middle life, but still pretty and fresh. (The construction of that sentence is a little incoherent. It is the green curtains that are still pretty, not the lady, and, of course, it is the lady who is in middle life, not the curtains.) The Mater Dolorosa hangs on one side of my head and a little silver crucifix on the other.

The family consists of Mme. la Marquise de Léthier and her three granddaughters, Olga, Marie, and Bichette de la Campagne. The first two give us our lessons and the third is a charming child of thirteen years. Then there is a daughter of the Marquise, Mlle. Germaine de Léthier, fair, fat, and forty. She is the Frenchiest French woman I ever beheld, and gesticulates with such enthusiasm and frenzy that she is obliged to sit a little apart at table, to save the dishes from flying about the apartment.

Our family is completed by Mariette, the cook, and Albert, the garçon, valet-de-chambre, and general butler. Albert is fifty and grey-haired and is as dove-like as the rest of the establishment, not so much from inherent virtue, perhaps, as because he fell from a seven-story building some years ago and

many of his faculties and possibilities dropped out or disappeared en route.

We ring for our baths at eight; afterwards Mariette brings me my cup of coffee and simple crust which I eat and think lovingly of American breakfasts. I adhere rigidly to all the French customs, however, so that my accent may be unimpeachable.

At ten we go into the two little faded salons for lessons. At twelve we all meet at déjeuner, an exceedingly well-cooked and delicate meal of four or five courses. After the déjeuner, Miss P. and I occupy ourselves with the sights of Paris, which are discouraging in number and beauty and interest. Dinner is at seven. You must remember the family is exceedingly poor now, but with an ancestry that would make you blush for your own. The husband of Mme. la Marquise was a Minister of Finance. Her father was a high officer in the Emperor's Guard, and was the person, she tells us, who discovered the plot against Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI and informed them of it. The name is generally withheld in history, but Madame has shown us all the letters and depositions relating to the matter. She has many royal presents given to her family from the King and from Marie Antoinette.

Her déjeuner toilette consists of a long mauve skirt of moiré-antique, very faded, and a jacket of green-and-white silk trimmed with pink. This jacket gives place, at dinner, to a black brocaded basque fastened with three kinds of military buttons and trimmed with red satin pipings and white lace. The violet skirt is retained. She is about as big as a robin and has snow-white hair. At seventy-two she preserves a beautiful high soprano voice, trained years ago under the famous Garciás.

The evening feast at seven is a time of much mental agony to us, as no member of the family speaks or understands a syllable of English and our French is in the long-clothes period of earliest infancy. Miss P. is afflicted with timidity even in English, and the cold sweat stands on her brow as the various members of the family endeavor to 'draw her out' in French. Naturally our conversation does not abound in wit, and, as we are corrected at every second word, even our ordinary vivacity is stifled before it has had time to breathe. The effect is something like this.

K. D. W. 'Nous avions êté —'

La Marquise: 'Pas *avions*, avons.'

K. D. W. 'Merci, Madame, nous avons êté — non, nous avons vu —'

Olga: 'Pas *voo*, Madame, vew, vew, vew.'

K. D. W. 'Merci bien, Mademoiselle, nous avons vu les tombeaux —'

Marie: '*Pas* tomm-bo, Madame, tong-bo.'

K. D. W. 'Merci beaucoup, Mademoiselle, nous avons vu les tongbo de les rois — non, des rois de la France. Nous sommes allées au — What is the top of an omnibus, J?'

Miss P. 'Don't you dare to look at me, or ask me a question. You know they will never leave the subject till they know where we've been and how we got there, and you know perfectly well I don't know how to say "on the top of an omnibus"!'

And so it goes. If it were not for the genders I could manage better; but to be obliged to remember or divine the sex of every substantive in the language is too much of a mental strain.

Fortunately, the good old verb 'aimer' can be

conjugated in all its tenses without words, and so, somehow or other, though we can scarcely exchange 'dear,' we are all fond of each other. Mme. la Marquise always holds my hand a few minutes after correcting my genders, which mitigates the misery a little. She also calls me 'ma belle dame' and sits beside me at the piano while I sing French songs with my American accent. In the evening after dinner we repair to the faded little salon for music, or other gayeties. Sometimes we have a 'bal,' sans cavaliers, and sometimes, alas! we have instructive French games. I think you would smile if you could see me partaking in these innocent childlike pastimes. There is one, for instance, where a little soft ball is thrown from one person to another. The one who throws says the first syllable of a French word, and the person to whom the ball is thrown has to respond instantly with the other half. There is something paralyzing about the presence of the ball in your lap. No cannon-ball could be more useful in destroying one's ideas. We have forfeits for the failures. One is to stand, back to the folding doors, and call some one who faces you. We all get into line in this manner, and at a given signal we are told to reverse and embrace our opposites. The person who pays the forfeit, naturally, in turning, has to kiss the door. It is not at all a bad game, for I always contrive to get Mlle. Olga whom I adore. I dare say it's a very pleasant game under certain circumstances, but, of course, in France, if the circumstances were favorable to enjoyment, they wouldn't play the game!

This is all very primitive and stupid; but so peaceful, so calm and restful, that I should like to stay here and study for six months if it were possible.

The accent and intonation of the French spoken in the family is my despair; it is so delicate, so musical, so exquisite. They all declare that my accent in reading and singing, though *very* foreign, naturally, after so little study, is something 'tout à fait adorable,' 'ravissante': I make due allowance for French politeness, but I recall several foreign ladies in America who have spoken bad English, but spoken it so bewitchingly that I wanted to embrace them at every other word. I sit and wonder if I am as nice as that in French: and if I could only decide in the affirmative I should live here and let Paris have the benefit of my charms.

It is not so long now before this whole summer will be a dream of the past, and I can only hope it will be half as profitable as I intended that it should be. To tell the truth my impressions are very much mixed at present, and it seems almost as if I had travelled too rapidly (from force of circumstances) to gain any clearly crystallized ideas, or useful suggestions for work. Perhaps my horizon has broadened unconsciously — I hope so.

KATE

I sail from Antwerp Nov. 1st on the Friesland of the Red Star Line, with Mr. and Mrs. V. of Boston. From Boston, New York, then San Francisco. Au revoir!

ABBEY LODGE, WEST MALVERN,
WORCESTERSHIRE, *Thursday Night*
Aug. eleventh, 1892

DEAR FAMILY:

As I told you, the landlady of the Westminster Arms, to whom I had letters from Mrs. Bell, of London, had no rooms, but sent me four addresses

in Malvern; accordingly, I left London at one-thirty yesterday, not knowing where I should turn up. As I was smarting under my last week's bill in Dover Street, I travelled third-class. The bill contained eight shillings for lights and the identical candles of the week before still adorned my mantel, for we dress by daylight even for eight o'clock dinner. Of course, when your room is three shillings you forget to add one and six for attendance and one for lights each day besides your fees. It is true that Williams the butler told Mrs. H. apropos of my departure, that Mrs. Wiggins might be a Marchioness by the finish she put on a dinner table 'just by sitting at it!' — but though it was before I feed him, it did not reconcile me to my bill which was seven pounds one. My dinner-party was two pounds of it. Well, I came third class and saved twelve shillings by it. Gave the guard a shilling to put me in a good place, not too crowded. What he gave me for it was a seat riding backwards with *seven* other women, all frumps, of course, but respectable.

We arrived at five-fifteen and I took a victoria and my trunk and started for my four-mile ride to West Malvern. The first address was Abbey Lodge and the others were Holly and Laburnum and Rose and Maydew and Hill-end Cottages and Villas respectively. The first charge was two guineas (ten dollars and fifty cents) a week for rooms without food. I went to all the others and they were engaged, so at seven-thirty, not desiring to sleep on the high road, I came back to my flower-embowered two-guinea cot. The landlady said if I stayed till Christmas she would take off two shillings a week and that she shouldn't charge a penny for the linen.

Thanking her with tears in my eyes, I requested dinner. There was no meat in the house so I supped frugally off 'biled eggs,' an underdone loaf, and a mug of ale. I have a nice sitting-room, first floor front, and a bedroom over it, meals served in sitting-room, of course. It is as beautiful as Heaven here and almost as high, for it's on the top of rolling hills (the village road winds round the side of them), and it overlooks a magnificent green valley, well-wooded, with waving green fields of grain and meadows, and haycocks in between.

NORTH MALVERN HOTEL

Friday, yesterday morning, I set out at ten and walked down the winding hill road to this village, going into many houses with an 'apartment' sign in the window. I think I trudged four miles and entered fourteen houses. They were generally full, and I was generally glad they were. I found one place better than my Abbey Lodge at two guineas, but linen, washing, lights, fires, food, cleaning, kitchen fire, service, and attendance were extra, and I could 'give what I liked to the servants.' Finally, in despair, I came to this little inn on the village road, flush with the street; it looks like a public house, and I dare say it is, but the rooms are comfortable and the view nobody could describe. From my sitting-room window where I write you can see the universe unrolled at your very feet. I'm occupying a pretty bad bedroom for a week or ten days but then I'll have two perfect ones for thirty shillings a week without food. I don't know how that will be, but there never was or could be anything in the world more beautiful than this place. Probably there's something wrong about the inn (though it's

kept by a nice man and wife and brood of children), but I don't care and can't help it if there is. I shall be safe, and my reputation will have to stand it. A char-à-banc drives daily to beautiful places for two and six or three and six to Worcester Cathedral, Eastnor Castle, etc., etc., but it seems to me I should feel decidedly awkward going alone and I don't like to do it. What I am going to do is to hire a donkey and a Bath chair. Did you ever hear of such a combination? It looks too sublimely silly and too pretty for description. A shilling an hour for this luxury. The dear little donkeys climb these hills half a dozen times a day and look fat and hearty. The Bath chair you know is like a tiny, tiny, miniature chaise on two wheels with a little wheel in front. Now don't be discouraged if I only send you brief bulletins. I've been writing notes for thirty-six hours just fulfilling obligations. Remember that my eyes are bad, bad, bad, my head always aches, and my arm and shoulder besides.

How do you think this does for the requested preface to the new English edition of 'Timothy' (three thousand copies)?

> That this simple story should have reached its thirtieth thousand in America is a fact sufficiently gratifying to its author — but that it should have met with so swift a response from the English public is additional ground for satisfaction. If 'Timothy' has won a welcome so far from home, it is because in certain common experiences of life there is no nationality; and the imperishable child in the heart of humanity makes strangers kin wherever they may meet, even if it be only between the covers of a book.
>
> KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

LONDON, *August*, 1892

The two large engravings in my sitting-room amuse me. One is 'The White Witch of Worcester on her Way to the Stake at High Cross' — The lady in question is in a white lawn wrapper with angel sleeves. She is preceded by two mounted soldiers in armor and followed by an abbess and eight surpliced boys with candles. I don't see the significance of the candles, unless they charged her four shillings apiece for them in her prison and she was bound to burn them to the end. The other picture is '*Susanne dans le bain surprise par les deux vieillards*.' It's a gem of realism.

KATE

NORTH MALVERN,
Sunday Night, August 14, 1892

DEAR FAMILY:

I went to service at Trinity Church at half-past six to-night, hoping by this means to escape a sermon, which in the Church of England in a small town means woe unutterable. I didn't escape it. I heard one thirty minutes long on a text announced by the curate as 'He that hath yaws to yaw let him yaw!' Perhaps you recognize it. I didn't for a minute. I got into a wrong pew and was dragged out by the sexton to the delight of all the children in the vicinity. I also passed the offertory bag in the wrong direction, thereby creating endless confusion. The service was all intoned by clergy and by a congregation which filled every seat of a large church. The principal good I got from the service was a beautiful hymn for 'Absent Friends,' a rhythmical version of 'The Lord watch between thee and me when we are absent one from the other.' I reached home and my dinner at eight and heard considera-

ble respectable roystering in the smokeroom, for a Sunday in England. The people have a mild form of dialect here which is very amusing in the children. I asked a little girl whom I met on the Great Malvern Hill if she'd ever been to the top. 'Many a time,' she said, 'but it's a 'igh 'ill — it *blows* yer!' (pronounced almost like *blouse*). Lady is always *Lidy* — 'A lidy of spotless reputition' — but that's cockney, I think, and prevails everywhere among the lower classes.

Monday Night:

Nothing happens here, of course, to tell you. I woke early with a bad headache, but managed to work two hours before my noonday meal. At five I had ordered my donkey chair, but the boy played me false, so I walked up the hill half a mile to Abbey Lodge to get some London letters I knew must be there. Walked leisurely down talking to the children on the way and sitting in crevices in the stone walls to rest and take in the view. The mountain-ash trees are hung with scarlet berries and there are harebells and yellow gorse among the rocks on the high hills.

Sunday Night, August 21st.

I've been ill most of two days this week, but have been able to work a little every day but one. I have driven in the public brake that goes past here, into Great Malvern, twice lately. Then I roam round the lovely town, rest in the Abbey and inspect the beautiful Worcester and Coalport china in the porcelain shops for an hour. Then I take the brake again and it goes round the hills for a shilling. Alternate days I commit the extravagance of my

donkey chair, seventy cents for two hours, and she (Jane, the donkey) takes me anywhere and everywhere, though I work harder than she does. There are many hills, of course, and I have to walk up and down them all, if they are at all steep. It is not cheap here, though it ought to be. My board cost me sixteen dollars this week, even in this quiet spot, where, of course, I never have soup or fish or game or fruit — nothing but plain meat, vegetables, bread, and ale. I am thoroughly glad I came here; I love the quiet and even the solitude is not oppressive while I have my work to absorb me. I am only sorry because eyes and head will not admit my working really more than four or five hours at a time. I take two hours out of doors every day so as to try and get well and am going to take from half-past four to seven now instead of five.

This Sunday afternoon I drove Jane to the village of Mathon — a beautiful country road between tangled hedges and by thatched cottages. Even vice is not terrible here, for I passed a cottage labelled 'County Police Station,' with a rose and a clematis over the door and a pleasing garden of cabbages and onions in front, with flaxen-haired babies playing in a grove of hollyhocks in the side yard. The road was very hilly and I walked a great deal and gathered wild flowers. I did not meet a human being save the children who ran out of the occasional cottages to see the donkey. When I am alone on the road I spend most of my time in the bottom of the Bath chair beating Jane with the wooden stick. She doesn't turn a hair, and she trots when she feels like it, never otherwise. At brief intervals she stops to admire the scenery. Then dynamite couldn't budge her, and the ribald small boys, who

are as prevalent here as in America, shout with derision at my helplessness. I complained to her owner, but he backed up Jane; said she couldn't afford to go any better than that for 'one and fourpence the hour.' I came home at five, wrote a while, and then went to church at half-past six.

I've just now had a slice of cold mutton, a mug of ale, and a thin raspberry tart, and shall go to bed at half-past nine, not, alas, to sleep all night. I've had some photographs taken in London — lovely as works of art — they look like crayon-studies of old Gainsborough and Sir Joshua portraits — and I hope they resemble me, but am not sure.

Affectionately

KATE

P.S. Two lodgers arrived confluently with me, and I heard the lady tell her daughter she thought I was an American in the same tone in which she would have announced that I was an Anthropoidal ape.

I should think the Muse would smile on my lodgings. They are precisely the kind that have seen the birth of great epics and century-making works of art. The view is almost too stimulating for an empty stomach, but in twelve hours I shall have another meal, please God, eggs again, with tea and a supple slice of bacon. Good-night. I go to my *feather* bed!

KATE

BRONXVILLE, N.Y., *Monday* A.M., 1893

DEAR MISTRESS HUTTON, —

I am in bed, too, and have been there, save for the two hours I stood up to read in Morristown, for over a week. Of course I missed the Vedders who

came out here yesterday. I don't exactly know why I was born; at least I see only glimmers of reasons. I have seats for Clyde Fitch's new play to-night and can't go there, either, and am at present engaged in a telegraphic attempt to postpone a reading in Hartford on Wednesday evening.

However, this is all extraneous to the subject. Of course, I will dine with you if I have a leg to stand upon. If I haven't, I'll give you good notice so that you can ask some happy and fortunate person in my stead, if need be (and whoever she is I'll inflict judgment upon her when I see her!) I may be stupid, you know. Anything is possible in these days, but as I understand it a hostess has to take *some* risks, and you take less with me than with many people. I've seen women who were stupid three times out of ten and my worst score is twice out of eight. Even then I wasn't the stupidest one at the table!

I've been housekeeping three brief weeks, and my one maid servant has gone to a relative's funeral, had a beau five evenings, had three days out, threatened to be married, and had a felon which prevented her from washing. Of course, I know that all these things are sure to happen, sooner or later, but in this case the ingenious and energetic Aurelia has compressed the dramatic situations into as small a space as if she were writing a play.

Ever yours, if hastily

KATE D. WIGGIN

The squirrels are running up and down the oak trees outside my window. Sometimes I think I'd rather be running up and down Broadway, though the country *is* beautiful!

From K. D. R.
and
N. A. S.
to Friends in America

UPPER LARGO, *June* 7, 1897
EAST NEUK O' FIFE
BIDE-A-WEE HOOSIE

TO OUR TRUSTY FIERES.

'Tis a dulefu' nicht; an' awfu' spate is ragin' wi'-oot an' we sit us doun to tell ye o' a' that's happed sin we pairted. Geordie's awa at the golf, rinnin aboot wi' a bag o' sticks after a wee bit ba', an' we are hame by oor lane. Laith will he be to weet his cork-heeled shoon, but lang ere the play'll be played, he'll wat his hat aboon. A pirrhe o' win' is blawin' the noo, an' as we luik ower the faem the haar is risin', weetin' the green swaird wi' misty show'rs, while the gleids o' licht, far seen by nicht, mak' the near mirk but mirker still.

Yestreen was a calm simmer gloamin', sae sweet an' bonnie that while the sun was sinkin' doun ower Largo Bay, we twa daundered owre the muir.

As we cam' thro' the scented birks we saw a trottin' burnie wimplin' neath the white-blossomed slaes, makin' a singan din; an' while a herd-laddie lilted ower the fernie brae, a cushat crood leesomely doun i' the dale. We pit aff our shoon, sae blithe were we — kilted our kirtles a little aboon the knee an' paidilt i' the burn, gettin' gey an' wet the while. Then burd Katie pu'd the gowans wat wi' dew, an' twined her bree wi' tasselled broom, while may Nora had a wee crackie wi' Tibby Buchan, the flesher's dochter frae auld Reekie. (Tibby's nae giglet gawky like the lave, she's a sonsie lass, as

sweet as ony hinny pear, wi' her twa pawkie een an' her cockernony snooded up fu' sleek.)

We were unco gled to win hame when a' this was ower an' after steekin' the door, to sit doun an' taist oor taes at the bit blaze.

Muckle thocht we o' oor braw lads ayont the seas — oor bonnie joes in Ameriky — an' sair grat we for all fren's we knew lang syne in oor ain countree.

Late at nicht, Geordie, the waukrife rogue, cam' ben the hoose an' tirled at the pin o' oor bigly bow'r door, speirin' for baps an' bannocks.

'Losh, mon!' cried oot burd Katie. 'Th' auld wifie i' the kitchen is in her box-bed, an' weel eneuch ye ken is lang since cuddled doon.'

'Oo, ay!' said Geordie, straikin' his curly pow the while, 'then fetch me parritch an' dinna be lang wi' 'em, for I've lickit Tammas McCandlish at the golf an' I could eat twa junts o' beef, gin I had them!'

'Hoots, lad!' said may Nora; 'gie ower makin' sic a meikle din! Ye ken verra weel ye'll get nae parritch the nicht; I'll rin an' fetch ye a piece to stop awee the soun.'

'Blathers an' havers!' cried Geordie; but he blinkit bonnily, an' when the tea was weel maskit he smoored his wrath an' stappit his mooth wi' a bit o' oaten cake. (We aye keep that i' the hoose, for the auld servant-buddy is sae dour an' dowie that to speak but till her we daur hardly mint, an' she is gey an' bad at the cookin'.)

In sic divairsions pass the lang simmer days in braid Scotland, but we canna write mair the nicht for 'tis the wee sma' 'oors ayont the twal.

Like the auld wife's parrot, 'we dinna speak muckle, but we're deevils to think,' an' we're aye thinkin' aboot ye.

Fair fa' ye a', lang may yer lum reek an' may prosperity attend oor clan!

Yours for aye

BURD KATIE
MAY NORA

NEW YORK, *February* 5, 1899
150 W. 59TH STREET

DEAR SIR OR MADAM, —

I have not the pleasure of knowing your age, sex, or color (although I hope the latter will be a trifle rosier before you finish this letter!).

You may be my dearest friend, nevertheless I have a grievance against you, the statement of which is the purpose of this communication.

Strangely enough, my literary life has been so innocent, sequestered, and barren of dramatic incident, that this, in middle life, is my maiden quarrel with a reviewer.

You have written in the February 'Atlantic' an article entitled 'A Group of Recent Novels.' It is arrant flattery to call 'Penelope's Progress' a novel, but I can easily imagine you found it difficult to class the book. It is not this indirect flattery, you may imagine, to which I object; I confess that flattery has either to be ridiculous or gross before it displeases me.

Had your criticism of 'Penelope's Progress' been directed to the workmanship of the book, I should have bowed my head to the rod in silence.

It is the critic's right and privilege to say in print whatever he honestly thinks about a book, be it ever so disagreeable to the author. He is at liberty to criticise plot, subject, grammar, style, purpose, method, manner, moral;

BUT

he has not the faintest shadow of right to question the author's personal good manners, or deny him the possession of an artistic (and moral) conscience, unless, indeed, he speaks from the safe standpoint of absolute knowledge. In my case such knowledge would, happily, have been impossible to acquire.

In your very appreciative and friendly notice of my story you say at the top of page 284, —

> *Once we have yielded a minor point of old-fashioned etiquette and conceded that one's experiences of private hospitality may properly be served over as side dishes at a public banquet, we shall find few entries more spicily concocted than Penelope's.*

I go farther than you in this matter, and would call the serving-up of private hospitality in public print anything but a 'minor' breach of etiquette; and I should never term the objection to such a course an 'old-fashioned' one. I was a lady for a good many years before I was a writer, my dear Sir or Madam, and you may say anything you like about my literary work if you will only leave me in possession of my good breeding.

The slender story in 'Penelope's Progress' is as wholly imaginary as it is in 'The Prisoner of Zenda.' I have never utilized a living being as a character in a book; never recounted in fiction a single experience of which I was the heroine.

I have eaten dinners a-many in Edinburgh, but I never sat at any table and described the feast for the delectation of my public.

I have known 'Earls' not a few, but if I ever sat beside one at dinner I should never make notes of his conversation.

There was never a Lady Baird or a Lady Baird's dinner, any more than there was ever a Penelope, Francesca, Ronald, Mrs. M'Collop, or Susanna Crum.

Certainly I have been to Holyrood in my own proper person, but palace entertainments are public functions; yet even there I should never describe my own experiences, but prefer to imagine other possible ones, such as I foisted upon Penelope and Francesca. I doubt if it is ever good art to do the thing you charge me with, but, be that as it may, it is never good breeding. So, I beg of you, put me anywhere you like in the scale of authors — that is not a vital matter — but in the greater things which go to the making-up of character, leave me where I have the right to be, among the women whose nice instincts would make it impossible for them to violate the sanctities of private hospitality.

Yours very sincerely
KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

From K. D. R. to G. C. R.

AT THE WIDDY MACSWEENY'S
SHEEHEREE, KILLARNEY, CO. KERRY,
THE EMERALD ISLE (1901)

HUSBAND DARLINT!

Och musha bedad, man alive, but it's a fine counthry over here, and it bangs all, the jewel of a view we do be havin' from the very windys, begorra!

Sheeheree House is at the back of beyant, but when we do be wishful to go to the Town sure there's ivery convaniency; for there's ayther a bit of a jauntin' car wid a skewbald pony for dhrivin', or

we can borry the loan of Dinnis O'Sullivan's blind ass with the plain cart, or we can just take a fut in a hand and leg it over the bog.

Sure it's no great thing to go do, but only a taste of divarsion like, though it's three good Irish miles an' powerful hot weather. Niver a dhrop of wet these days, for it's a great old summer we're havin' entirely; it has raison to be proud of itself, begob!

Paddy, the gossoon that drives the car, (it's a gossoon we call him, but faix he shtands five feet six in his shtockins whin he wears anny,) — Paddy, as I'm tellin' you, lives in a cabin down below the knockawn, a thrifle back of the road.

There's a stack of turf forninst it and a pitaty pot sits beside the door, wid the hens and chuckens racin' over into it like aigles, tryin' to swally the smell. Across the way there does be a bit of sthrame wid troutses into it and a growth of rooshes under the edge, lookin' that smooth and greeny it must be a pleasure intirely to the grand young pig and the goat that spinds their time by the side of it.

Paddy himself is raggety like and a sight to behould wid the daylight shinin' through the ould coat on him; but he's a dacint spalpeen, an' sure we'd be lost widout him. His mother is a widdy woman with nine moidherin' childer, not countin' the pig and the goat, an' she has no conthroul of anny of them, bad scran to her: — sure the divil is busy wid them the whole of the day. Here's wan o' thim now, makin' me as onaisy as an ould hin on a hot griddle by slappin' big sods of turf over the dyke and settin' all our geese and ducks to leppin' like hares. We've a right to be lambastin' them, this blessed minute, the crathurs. Sure if they was mine, they'd sup

sorrow wid a spoon of grief when they wint to bed this night!

Mistress Butcher, who lives at Danesfort, on the road to the Town, is an iligant lady intirely, an' she's oncommon friendly, may the paice of Heavin be her sowl's rest! She's rale charitable like and liberal with whatever and as for Himself he taches the dead-an'-gone languages in the grand sates of larnin', and has more eddication and comperhension in him than the rest of County Kerry rowled together, the Saints bless him!

Then there's Lord and Lady Kenmare of Killarney House; they're the rale quality, begob! Faix, there's no iliganter family on this counthry side! They do be very free wid the eatin' and the drinkin' an' the figurandyin' we do have with them, bangs all! — So you see ould Ireland is not too disthressful a country to be merry in, and we have our healths finely, glory be to God!

Well, we must be shankin' off wid ourselves now to the Butchers' where they're wettin' a dhrop o' tay for us this mortial instant. It's no good for yous to write to us here, for we'll be quit out of this before the letter has a chanst to come; though sure it can folly us as we're jiggin' along, if you send it to Haslams'. Don't be thinkin' you've slipped hould of our ricollections, though the breadth of the ocean say's between us.

May your life be aisy and may the Heavens be your bed!

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN
NORA CREINA

August 17, 1899

—— —— Maine

May 25, 1906

My dear Mrs. Riggs —

Will you pardon me, an utter stranger, for making one criticism on 'Rebecca of Sunny Brook Farm'?

It seems to me that one of the first lessons which a child should be taught is to speak the truth. Rebecca certainly did not speak the truth when she invited the missionaries to spend the night with her aunts. What lesson could an impulsive child draw from reading this episode, but that a lie was allowable, if it seemed needful?

With many apologies for my plain speaking,

I am truly yours

Answer to above

Hollis, *June* 17, 1906

My dear Miss ——:

I think you are entirely and absolutely wrong in your criticism of Rebecca's attitude and invitation at the Missionary meeting.

Rebecca (in my mind) was a very imaginative child with decided literary and dramatic instincts. Couple those qualities with quick impulses and a warm heart, and you would doubtless get — during the growing years — an occasional tendency to state pictorially, rather than with plain and rugged exactness. This would apply chiefly to descriptions, narrations, and little affairs involving no principles. For myself I thank God heartily for this attribute of human nature, this tendency of the human mind, and I doubt not that God, who puts all beauty and grace of word and thought and deed into the dull world, thanks us for helping Him in this way.

However, all that is compatible with intrinsic truth. Rebecca (in my conception of her) was a true creature, making mistakes, seeing hastily, acting faultily often; but her soul was set towards right. How any one could read pages 191, 192, and 193, and think Rebecca anything but innocent of all wrong speaking and thinking, passes my comprehension! The reader can see every phase of her thought, and though he knows the inhospitality of Aunt Miranda's mind, that does not in the least affect the situation. I should not like to have too narrow (nor indeed too broad) a view of truth, if it made vague my thought. But all of us who have eyes can see the rose; only to some it will always look pinker than to others; and whether this is a defect in vision, or greater keenness, only God can judge.

Sincerely yours
KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

Bowdoin College, Maine

[*A note of thanks for the honorary degree of Litt.D. sent to the Commencement Luncheon, June 22, 1905, and read to the Alumni by President Hyde.*]

No one could appreciate more truly or guard more sacredly than I, the honor that Bowdoin has conferred upon me.

If the coming years hold any successes for me, I will pour them into the lap of the mother, saying, 'Beloved, you who hold in the deep bosom of your memory the achievements of your men-children, take these my little woman-triumphs, remembering that there is no sex in loyalty, and that while your sons are far away winning laurels for you in the

world of noise and struggle, your daughters stay by your side, spinning, weaving, and loving.'

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

To the Dear Readers of the David Copperfield Library in London

(With a complete set of Books by K. D. W.)

I began to love Charles Dickens and to read him when I was a little 'country mouse' eight years old; and when I was eleven (oh, wonderful good fortune!) I travelled with him on a certain railway journey between Maine and Massachusetts. It was a magical, a miraculous trip of two hours, during which my child-hand was in his and his arm around my waist; so that in that long talk we became real friends. I have told the tale in 'A Child's Journey with Dickens.' Some of you may have read it, and it will explain my interest in the David Copperfield Library.

There are many other Americans, thousands of them, who love and read Dickens and want to share in making this library in the house where he lived as a boy. One of them, Annie Carroll Moore, who chooses the children's books for the New York Public Library, has made this representative selection which I am asked to send as a gift from the generous American publishers whose names appear in each of their presentation volumes.

NEW YORK, *November*, 1921

HOLLIS CENTRE P. O., 1909
EXPRESS: BAR MILLS, MAINE

TO GEORGE C. RIGGS COMPANY —
DEAR SIRS, —

The ultimate prosperity of a business house will surely depend upon the way it handles its country custom. Your firm has a high standing in the large cities, but its conduct towards modest buyers in small villages is open to some criticism. I know of a good Christian family, knit by very close and intimate ties to your firm, where the waitress can no longer wipe the dishes because the plates slip through the holes in the towels.

The three servants have for several weeks dried their hands and faces on their white cotton petticoats, aided now and then by a remnant of flannel underwear.

The situation would not be so fraught with pain and desperation if the family had ordered expensive goods; but they simply requested cheap and coarse samples of diaper-huck, twilled bleach, diagonal bird's-eye, diamond-pattern crash, double-faced huckaback, or any variety of sunbleached Bloomfield stock of no use to large customers. Your firm is much concerned with *foreign* duties. Has it sufficiently considered its domestic and family duties?

Yours, in behalf of an unwiped household.

K. D. R.

145 W. 58TH STREET
April 13, 1920

TO MISS NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH
Lafayette Hotel
Portland, Maine

MADAM: —

You were quite right in suspecting yourself to be a treacherous viper, stinging the hand that selected your cape, but if you were right I could forgive you, as I have for many other acts and speeches of Wilsonian autocracy.

My words in my last letter were:

> 'You can flatten this satin collar down, and show front of dress, or ruff it all up to keep warm in neck.'

You criticise my spelling of *ruff*, but you are *wrong*. I ought to have put 'ruff' in quotation marks, perhaps, but it is much better than 'rough.' A 'ruff' of chiffon, fur, ostrich, ribbon, or lace is a well-known article, and is thus spelled, 'ruff.' When you make a large circular collar into something like a 'ruff,' it is perfectly allowable to 'ruff it up,' i.e., make it resemble a ruff. 'Roughing' it up is imbecile, and any one who could use it has no conception of delicate subtleties of language. It is a pity Queen Elizabeth is dead or you might suggest she'd better spell her 'ruffs' 'roughs.'

Anyhow, the mails and freight and express are all stalled and traffic of every sort in a semi-suspended state since Sunday, so you may not get the cape till summer and won't want to 'rough it up' (Ye Gods! what spelling!) on account of the heat.

Yours
THE PURCHASING AGENT

Kate Douglas Wiggin makes plea for the beautiful Saco River

[*Among those interested in the so-called Clark Power Bill now before the Legislature is no less a personage than Kate Douglas Wiggin whose summer home is at Hollis, Maine. Through her attorney the following was presented before the committee at Augusta yesterday.*]

NEW YORK, 145 WEST 58TH STREET
Feb. 15, 1915

MR. DANIEL R. HASTINGS, of the Committee
on Interior Water Ways, Augusta, Me.

DEAR SIR: —

I own a summer home in Salmon Falls, Hollis, Me., fifteen acres of land, a cottage, and a third house containing a Library and Tea Room, all on the village street, and all hopelessly reduced in value, if the Clark Power Company bill is passed. I make no plea, however, on the ground of financial losses, for I wish to preserve the Saco River in its present estate chiefly on sentimental grounds. The little village of Salmon Falls on the river-bank has one of the loveliest locations in Maine and hundreds of visitors from other States stand on our bridge exclaiming at the beauty of the falls above and the magnificent gorge below. If the proposed dam is built, one of Maine's beauty spots is forever defaced at a single blow. Instead of our falls and rapids, the now lovely banks of our river will be covered by a shallow lake, now rising, now falling, at the bidding of business men who live too far away to be troubled by our irreparable losses, and think only of their substantial gains. Our wonderful gorge will be filled with water like a common tub; the Woodman Reservation (now the property of the

Appalachian Club) will be partially submerged, and our historic Pleasant Point, flooded. Great practical good, indeed, must come to the dwellers in Salmon Falls, both on the Hollis and Buxton sides of the river, to atone for the sacrifice of these picturesque and beloved features of our landscape.

If the tone of this letter is unbusinesslike, I make no apologies. The Saco River was the dearest friend of my childhood; the moment I had earned money enough by my pen I flew back to its side and bought a home which is open six months of the year; a home on which I have lavished improvements; a home that is the gathering-place of the whole countryside. The river runs through all my books as it has run through my life, and the sound of it is in my ears whenever I am away from it. Shall I not try to protect it as I would a human being? I would work years, gladly, if I could preserve it in its present beauty! Is not the whole trend of public sentiment and opinion now-a-days towards the preservation of our natural resources? We have awakened to the sins we have committed in scarring, mutilating, and butchering our noble pine woods, when a humble study of scientific forestry might have shown us a way to make them legitimately profitable without such wilful waste.

Equal to our forests in value are our splendid waterways. Harnessed to some appointed task they may be, but is it not possible to treat them with respect and yet derive power enough from them to develop prosperity in the villages along their banks? No one wishes this prosperity to come more than I do, for in common with my family I have labored heart and soul for the good of Hollis and Buxton during the last twenty years.

As long as I have breath to speak I will preach the gospel that a tree means something more than lumber and that a river stands for something better than mere 'power.' Let our 'promoters' strive really to create instead of destroying; let them build up their private fortunes — the more the better; give employment, revive flagging industries where they can; but let them maintain a more reverent attitude towards beauty and let them respect the rights of those who stand to gain nothing, but lose things as dear to them as life itself. I beseech the committee to study the question carefully to see if landmarks infinitely precious to some of us must perish off the face of the earth. Far away in New York I am hearing in imagination the arguments for and against the bill. The Saco is snowbound and cannot speak for itself, but I am wondering if I must write in my diary: Lost: In Augusta, between sunrise and sunset on Feb. 19, 1915, a beautiful river, the pride and delight of all who live on its banks.

Respectfully yours

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

Letter to The Lewiston Journal (Lewiston, Maine)

[*In a very bright and entertaining letter, containing more or less sarcasm, which legislators and some other officials will duly appreciate, Kate Douglas Wiggin (Mrs. George C. Riggs), in the Lewiston (Maine) Journal, assures her friends that there is no foundation for the current rumor that Quillcote is to become a lighthouse in the middle of a lake which will be formed by the big dam to be built on the Saco River at Union Falls. Her letter is as follows:*]

A Boston evening paper published a few days ago a communication on its front page from a correspondent in Maine, who announced that, because of

the building of a new dam on the Saco at Union, a half-mile below the little village of Hollis, 'Quillcote,' my summer home, with its acres of land, would be flooded, and the house converted into a storage reservoir, or a lighthouse. A morning paper in Maine published a witty and sympathetic editorial soon after, confirming what it supposed to be the facts; and a flood of condolences began to pour in upon me which has transformed me in my own proper person into an animated storage reservoir, and constrained me into such profuse public denials that I appear to myself very much like a 'lighthouse set on an inland cape.'

If I only knew the name and address of the original culprit (no doubt an unconscious one), I would invite him to luncheon at Quillcote and take him to the Salmon Falls bridge for a glance at the river in question. He would then see the physical impossibility of his announcement. The submerging of my house and home acres would mean the flooding of six or eight other houses, and several (in point of fact, five) public roads to other villages. Even a soulless corporation would hesitate at such a step, and hesitate a trifle longer because it would put out of commission the water powers at Bar Mills and West Buxton, higher up the river.

One of the articles on the subject is headed: 'Maine Author Loses Her Brave Fight. The Summer Home of Kate Douglas Wiggin Must Go. Sunnybrook Farm Must Be Drowned Out, As It Were.' The fact is my fight against the proposed dam two years ago was neither brave nor long. I invoked the law, spent several hundred dollars, wrote reams of letters, appeared before the legislature, and discovered in fifteen minutes' intimacy

with the Committee that the dam would be built at the exact spot and of the precise height that the promoters wished, notwithstanding the protests of a few sentimental beauty-lovers!

Accordingly, being a busy person, I retired peacefully and have not mentioned the river from that day to this, for the building operations have gone on slowly because of the War.

I cannot go so far as to object to dams in general, though naturally I prefer them on other people's rivers, notably on rivers where dwell the members of Interior Water Ways Committees! Not that a Committee would ever look at a river as a river; their Napoleonic glances would view it merely as a water-power. I concede the necessity of harnessing the powers of Nature to the interests of big business; my only contention is that there should be one lover of beauty on all committees dealing with forests and rivers; one person (I fear it would have to be a woman, for there would not be enough male lovers of beauty 'to go round') who would ponder, study, scheme, work, fast, pray, with a view to devising ways in which Nature could be forced to serve Man and the beauty of the landscape preserved. As it is now, the heads of the various enterprises that swarm on the banks of defenceless rivers seem to revel in making as much mess, fuss, clutter, litter, confusion, untidiness, desolation, and ugliness as they can. They mean well, you know they are safeguarding their legitimate profits, developing state industries, paying good wages, and considering the health of their operatives. The only trouble is that to them beauty means nothing at all, or at best something trivial and not worth conserving, yet it influences thousands upon thousands of lives, soothing, heal-

ing, refining, uplifting, stealing in upon tired bodies and weary minds and 'doing good like a medicine.'

I am on friendly terms with the dam-builders, though reproaching myself that I could not somehow have helped having them transform our wonderful rapids into an uneventful sort of mongrel lake, and I am sure they think I am better at writing books than building dams.

This letter voices my thanks to the sixty or more strangers and readers who have written offering me sympathy in the apparent loss of my beloved summer home to which they affectionately insist on alluding as the Village Watch-Tower, or by turns as Sunnybrook Farm. Quillcote looks on nothing but elms and apple orchards, fields and the Saco. The Village Watch-Tower is any little cottage so placed as to see the bridge and the six roads leading over it from the hills on both sides of the river. Such a cottage might be occupied, as I imagined in my story, by an eager-minded old lady, kept by physical debility in her chair by a window, and from thence 'guessing' what was going on in the community by the evidence gathered hourly by her own keen eyesight. Sunnybrook Farm, Rebecca would tell you, is somewhere 'up country' in Maine, while her adventures took place in a fictitious village called Riverboro.

Sincerely yours

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

HOLLIS, MAINE, *July* 6, 1918

Toasts, Book-Inscriptions and Introductions

To Ellen Terry

(Introduction to a Book of Welcome)

The names in this book are interlined throughout with radiant memories and happy anticipations, though they will be visible to no one but yourself, as they are in sympathetic ink of a peculiarly confidential tint.

The little volume is a Book of Welcome from certain loyal admirers to that incarnation of poetic harmony we call Ellen Terry; the enchanting, the unapproachable, the imperishable Beloved of the English-speaking stage.

Since that star danced under which you were born, up to this present moment, dear Ellen Terry, each of us could have said, as Portia to Bassanio:

'One-half of me is yours, the other half yours . . . and so all yours.'

To Ellen Terry

(On the fly-leaf of 'Penelope')

I have never writ my name in a book for a Queen of England, nor ever, until now, for a Queen of Hearts. The kingdom of the one is bounded by seas and shores, by law and circumstance. That of the other is elastic ground, and whatever corner of the universe Her Majesty doth invade, there hosts of loyal subjects rise up and cry, 'Queen's Men! Queen's Men!'

Kate Douglas Wiggin

New York, 1893

To Geraldine Farrar [1]

(A Toast)

As my friendship with Miss Farrar antedates that of my husband by several days, I will arrogate to myself, unknown to him, the pleasure of proposing her health. Her genius she was born with! Her Fairy Godmother brought to her cradle the gift of voice and the gift of instinct. But she herself added the ability to work, to think, to grow, and it is the combination of these qualities that make her one of the younger glories of America. I drink, not to the prima donna assoluta, not to the court singer of the Kaiser, not to the favorite singer of half-a-dozen Continental opera-houses, but to the plucky American girl who was not content with the talent God gave her, but set to work to help Him, and made it the beautiful, vigorous, live, joyous thing it is to-day. Here's to Geraldine Farrar and the mother who helped!

K. D. R.

Madam Butterfly Dinner [2]

Here is a toast to Geraldine!
The bird that lights on a bough to preen
His soft little breast with the satin sheen —
None of his notes are so sweet, I ween,
As those in the throat of Geraldine!

Here is a toast to Geraldine!
Her heart is as warm as her wit is keen.
She's a rosebud, still in its sheath of green
In the singing-garden of girls the queen!

[1] At a dinner at the house of Mr. and Mrs. George C. Riggs.
[2] At the house of Mr. Clyde Fitch. 1907.

Passionate 'Juliet,' scarce sixteen,
Grave-eyed 'Elizabeth' stately in mien,
'Marguerite' — innocent, crystalline,
Loveliest 'Butterfly' ever was seen!
Drink to the future of Geraldine!

K. D. W.

Postscript

In the verses above I've struggled to glean
All practical rhymes for Geraldine —
It's lucky for me that the girl I mean
Wasn't born twins, or a 'philopene.'
Then had my Muse still wearier *been* —
For nothing is left me but Atropine,
Listerine, Vaseline, Glycerine,
Or vulgar allusions to Camp Canteen!
All *most* unworthy of Geraldine.

K. D. W.

To Mrs. W. Y. Sellar

[*Inscription in a shilling copy of 'A Village Stradivarius'*]

[*From a Lady sending a shilling book of her own writing, to another Lady who writes them at ten and six!*]

Here's a wee shilling book
My dear ten and six friend;
If by hook or by crook
You can just overlook
Size and price of this book,
You *may* read to the end;
Here's a wee shilling book
My dear ten and six friend!

K. D. R.

To——

Writer of a Literary Tome

[*Apropos of Literary Atoms and Literary Tomes*]

Said the Burn to the Sea,
'Aren't you rather *too* big?'
'To be small,' said the Sea,
'Seems to me "*infra dig.*"'

Said the Burn to the Sea,
'You look awfully deep.'
'So I am,' said the Sea,
'To be shallow is cheap.'

Said the Burn to the Sea,
'I grow nice little trout.'
'I just wish,' said the Sea
'You could watch my Whales Spout!'

Yours enviously
A Literary Atom

Lines in an Album

If I were sure that thoughts of me
Would linger in thy mind
But half as long, as I of thee
Shall cherish memory kind;
I would not give this book a name,
Which on the page would fix'd remain.
But time and absence both conspire
To threaten what I most desire;
So let me write and thus be sure
My name will here, at least, endure.

Inscription in a shilling copy
of "A Village Stradivarius"
sent to Miss Sellar by R. D. R.

From a Lady sending a shilling
~~copy~~ book of her own writing
to another Lady who writes
them at ten & six!

Here's a wee shilling book
My dear ten-&-six friend!
By by book or by crook
You can get over book
Size & price of this book
You may read with ease!
Here's a wee shilling book
My dear ten-&-six friend!

R. D. R.

To ——

[*With a copy of 'Rebecca'*]

This book is too slight a thing to voice the rush of Maine's rivers, the strength of her rocks, or the rugged beauty of her seacoast; but the author hopes that something at least of the fragrance of pine forests, the sweetness of wild-flowers, and the quaint humor of Maine's farming folk may have crept into its pages.

The story has been praised for its fidelity to the soil. If this is true, it is because for the forming of strong and lively impressions Love is the best of all sensitive plates.

K. D. R.

[*At 'Peep o' Day,' Mr. Laurence Hutton's home in Princeton, New Jersey, there were a series of pretty and poetic ceremonies attendant upon the first lighting of each fire in the mansion, as the various rooms came, one by one, into readiness for use. Special friends of the host and hostess were successively honored by this delightful task, and several eminent writers served as priests of the domestic hearthstones.*

Below will be found the toast given by Kate Douglas Wiggin on one of these occasions, as she touched her taper to the carefully piled fuel and the blaze roared up the wide chimney.]

The Lighting of the Fire
in
Peep o' Day Dining-Room
Christmas Night, 1899

May the flames kindled on this hearthstone be as bright and cheery as the welcome of its master and mistress: may the drafts be as free as those we confidently draw upon their friendship; and may the

only smoke be that which ascends from generous sacrifices.

May the glow of the firelight illuminate the hearts of the guests who sit in the inglenook, until at length the warmth shall steal upon those who sit afar off in cold places, and there shall be no miracle in this save the common daily miracle of all happy firesides.

In Memoriam

Thoughts on the Death of the Singer, Tom Dobson

By Kate Douglas Wiggin

Tom Dobson is dead! As I write the quaint boyish name that never completely defined or expressed him, it seems impossible that only a week ago he made his little part of the world vibrant with his unique personality.

As singer, accompanist and composer he was known only to a few hundreds in a few cities East and West, but by those hundreds he will be remembered longer than many a great artist whose grave is surmounted by a towering monument of marble.

With a voice of no intrinsic beauty, he had the power to make the speech of his songs music and the songs themselves something altogether rare and lovely.

A sense of humor is perhaps a dangerous gift to a singer unless he uses it discreetly — a so-called 'comic song' being frequently the lowest form of art; but Tom Dobson's sense of humor was of an exclusive sort that belonged to him alone. One could laugh again and again at his perfectly irresistible musical (and always musicianly) pranks!

There was the most delicious humor in his face, in his voice, in his fingers; indeed his very body was eloquent with mischief when he sang certain songs of his own making. One laughed at him, and with him, wholeheartedly; but in another instant one found that all this nonsense was but the upper current of a deeper sea. A few chords, a change of theme and he made mirth seem cheap and obvious while he touched the hearts of his hearers and made their eyes moist with unshed tears.

Who will ever forget his singing of John Carpenter's 'Improving Songs for Anxious Children' — the wittiest things of their kind in all musical literature? He could wake ripples of merriment in an audience without once losing his boyish dignity, and he always had beautiful contrasts in reserve, among them many of his own settings of John Masefield's verses, in which he showed his heart and imagination, the sources from which he drew both laughter and tears; for after all, unless an artist has this two-fold power there is no touch of genius in him.

He was a Protean creature — Tom Dobson; versatile, mischievous, witty, tender, manly, lovable, full to the brim of creative talent, and all these qualities were mirrored in his work. To those who have only heard him in a few public recitals, this seems fulsome praise, but it will be simple truth to the little circle of musical and literary friends who knew him intimately. I do not quite know how to measure such terms as 'greatness' and 'littleness'! When I recall the hours of keen delight this boy's music gave me — the pure fun, the joy in the fresh revelation of some fine poem wrought into music, and contrast them with the boredom I have suffered when hearing some academic darling of the

critics — I can only reflect that there are voices and other voices, singers and other singers, artists, artisans and interpreters of all sorts! There are those whose perfections leave one cold, and others who redeem their faults with every breath they draw. There is the estimable human machine, and there is the natural 'spellbinder,' a part of whose power lies in his own feeling and a part in the feeling that he evokes in his audience. There is nothing so undying, so persistent as personality! It is one of the perpetual fires that continue to burn long after other flames are extinguished. The critics, did they review the seemingly foreshortened, unfinished life of this young artist would not perhaps place him in the first rank; but the first rank, though never crowded, must always include half a hundred names or more, and Tom Dobson, if not among these shining ones, would always have had, must always have had a place all his own! There he is, and there he will forever be, enshrined in the hearts of his loyal admirers and friends. It is such as he who are passionately mourned and never replaced.

Introduction

['*To Mother: an Anthology of Mother Verse*'[1]]

There was once a Child who lived very much by himself in a tall building, with many windows looking skyward.

He did not lack for care, for he had food and drink, shelter and raiment given to him, but in such a way that he was always hungry and thirsty and cold, and the young soul of him pined and knew not why.

The days were very dreary and very long, though

[1] Houghton Mifflin Company.

in a child's life they should flit by like painted butterflies on the wing.

There was a court-yard far, far below, so that out-of-doors was not withheld from the Child, but when he reached the place from which the green wood could be seen the blue sky was so far away that he felt desolate and longed for a smaller world of which he could be a part.

And so it was, day after day, till twilight came and hid the bigness of things, and when the cool dark floated into his bedroom, and the friendly moon and stars came to keep him company, he was happy, for then he drifted off into the land of dreams. He drifted deeper and farther into dream-land than a child should, whose waking hours were so lonely, for gradually his daytime life grew more and more vague to him, and the dream grew ever more and more real.

It led him first into a garden; always the same garden, in which every night something new and enchantingly lovely appeared, to be welcomed with joy and held in love and remembrance till he should see it again.

The garden itself was open to the sun and it breathed something more than mere beauty — offering to every sense a rare and subtle charm that could be felt but not defined.

There was a Balm of Gilead tree in one corner and in another a group of young pines, — slender strong trees under which one could hide in the noonday heat. And there were tufts of sweet herbs sending out health-giving odors, and there were tangles of mignonette and heliotrope and lavender and purple clover, with honeysuckle climbing here and there to make the air fragrant.

The flowers were all dear familiar ones, such as violets and pansies, clove pinks and hyacinths, but loveliest of all was a clump of Madonna lilies, their tall green stalks crowned with dazzling white blossoms. The Child crept under them, and looking up, marvelled at the shining purity of the blooms that made a little white heaven over his head.

There were birds in the trees and the Child sometimes fancied that they tried to speak to him, but he could never puzzle out the meaning of their language. But one night when the birds slept he heard the rustle of great wings, a stirring of the air, a soft flutter, and then in the darkness a Voice. There was no Presence but the Voice was clear and it said:

'Is the garden beautiful, my Child?'

'The most beautiful thing in the world,' answered the Child. 'Is it you who are making it?'

'Yes,' said the Voice. 'I am making the garden, with your help.'

'But I have done nothing,' said the Child.

'You have loved it,' said the Voice, 'and Love makes things grow.'

'And shall I ever plant anything in the garden myself?' asked the Child.

'Yes, for the garden is now finished, save for that which you will plant with your own hands.'

And then the Child awoke, with the perfume of lilies in his nostrils, and it was the beginning of another long day. But night came with a difference. The Child had barely slipped into the dream when he felt that he was being swiftly wafted to the garden by some unseen force instead of making his way thither by his own eager steps. And the wings that bore him up and guided him were so soft, and

so strong that he did not wonder when he heard the Voice. And the Voice said:

'If you were to plant something precious in the garden, my child, what spot would you choose?'

'I would choose the spot under the Madonna lilies,' said the Child; 'for the blossoms make a little white heaven overhead and near by is a crystal spring whose pebbles are changed into gold and precious stones by the moonbeams.'

Like puffs of thistledown they swept over the young pines and floated past the little groves of mignonette and lavender and purple clover, till they alighted near the crystal spring where the Madonna lilies grew.

'Stretch out your hand, my child,' said the Voice, 'and what you find in the wet grass, that is for you to plant.'

And the Child stretched out his hand and touched something soft and warm hidden in a blanket of leaves.

'Is it a bird?' he whispered, for he felt a throb under his hand.

'*No, it is not a bird,*' said the Voice, '*it is a heart!* — Make a hollow for it like a nest; do not unwrap it, but lay it gently in the hollow; cover it lightly with soft earth, then rise to your feet and step back, for the place on which you stand will be holy ground.'

And the Child did as he was bidden. He made a hollow like a nest; he laid the heart gently in the hollow without removing its blanket of leaves; then he covered it lightly with earth and raising himself to his feet stepped back and waited in silence.

And straightway (for there is no time in dreams) the heart stirred, and trembled, and swelled, and broke through the soft earth, and lifted itself and

grew! And it seemed to summon to its aid all the richest treasures of the garden; the strength of the young pines, the aroma of the sweet herbs, the fragrance of the flowers, the healing balsam that flowed from the Balm of Gilead tree, and the purity of the lilies.

And when it came to its moment of full perfection (for there are no miracles in dreams since all dreams are miracles) lo! it was not a growing and blossoming heart, but — a Mother!

And the Child knew! For knowledge comes swiftly and surely in dreams. He stretched out his arms, and in the deep peace that followed mutual recognition and need, the Wingèd Presence vanished softly into the darkness, leaving the Mother and Child together in the Garden of Dreams.

A Prayer in the Presence of Death[1]

By Kate Douglas Wiggin

O! God, our Heavenly Father, whom we never really learn to know all the days of our life, help us to draw nearer to Thee and to understand something of Thy wisdom, Thy justice, and Thy love. Above all, we pray Thee for a fuller knowledge of the way we are traveling in this earthly journey, so that when we come to its end we may meet it unafraid. In the noise and heedlessness, the haste and restlessness of our days, we lose touch with Thee, our Creator; yet, having come forth from Thee, whither shall we turn, when all is over, save to that source of life from which we sprang into the world that now surrounds us? That world, it seems in moments of clear vision, must be a school wherein

[1] *Good Housekeeping*, October, 1915.

we are to learn such use of our common human powers that when we leave it we may take to the next life hearts and spirits warm, alive, and growing.

Thou hast put us here to learn; we feel it anew in the presence of death — to learn by our joys, and by the joys of others reflected in our own hearts (O! we thank Thee for Joy!); to learn by the labor of our hands and brains (O! we thank Thee for the blessedness of Labor!); to learn by loving, as fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, friends and neighbors (O! we thank Thee for the precious gift of Love!) and to learn at last from grief, as plants that are able to resist bleak rains and storms grow strong with a strength never born in eternal sunshine (O! we thank Thee — not, we fear, with full hearts, but half reluctantly, as smitten children look up through tears — we thank Thee solemnly for Sorrow!). It may be that we are not called upon to thank Thee for Death! Perhaps, if we accept death humbly, with bowed heads, with hearts in which hope is not extinguished — perhaps that is all that Thou dost expect of the faltering, stumbling children that we must appear in Thy sight.

Thou dost understand our sighs and longings, our lonely nights and dreary days, but even with heavy hearts and wet eyes we look up into Thy face and yield our tribute of faith and trust and loyalty!

Amen.

CHAPTER XVI

IDYLLS OF THE SACO

November sees our latest roses gone;
But still, come frost, come snow, your Rose lives on;
By Saco stream we see her spring, and there
Beneath the breath of Love grow sweet and fair,—
A favour'd Flower, predestined to unclose
From Rosebud girt with thorns, to perfect Rose,—
A perfect Rose that shall not fade away,
But keep her bloom while frailer flowers decay.

H. J.

SO sang Kate's Private Poet Laureate, as she affectionately called him, of her 'Rose o' the River,' which, unpretentious tale that it is, devoid of novelty in plot, will yet be remembered, not only for its picture of the superannuated log-driver, 'Old Kennebec,' but as an idyll of the Saco. The beloved river, beloved by my sister from that summer evening when she first heard its song, rolls through the brief and simple story, like a deep-toned accompaniment, never obtruded, but always there. 'The river runs through all my books, as it has run through all my days,' she writes, 'and the last sound I expect to hear in life will be the faint far-away murmur of Saco Water.'

Two more river-books were published in the year that 'Rose' appeared, Eden Phillpotts's 'The River,' and Ruth McEnery Stuart's 'The

River's Children.' Mr. Phillpotts's is, no doubt, incomparably the finest work of art, but Ruth Stuart's stream chuckles and gurgles over its rocks as its author used to do in reading her Southern stories, while in Kate's book, as Wordsworth said of Yarrow,

> 'For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
> In foamy agitation;
> And slept in many a crystal pool
> For quiet contemplation.'

In all three stories, said Mr. Phillpotts, in a letter to K. D. W., the river is the protagonist and they sing the song of the waters in varied tones.

The inscription which my sister wrote in the special copy of the story presented to her husband will be of interest here, I think.

To G. C. R.

'On one side of the river grew the briar rose and on the other the sturdy pine; and the pine yearned for the rose.'

That's all the story, dear, and you who know the river, the falls, the rapids, the bridge, and all the lovely spots on the shore where the briar roses and pines grow, — you will find something to like in these pages written by your wife.

K. D. R.

Christmas, 1905

Filled with the courage of inexperience, I often urged K. D. W. to make 'Rose o' the

River,' into a dramatic sketch, not for its simple and conventional plot, of course, but for the character of 'Turrible' Wiley, or 'Old Kennebec,' who would make the fortune of a character actor.

There were not wanting [so the story tells us] those who dubbed him Uncle Ananias also, for reasons too obvious to mention. After a long, indolent, tolerably truthful and useless life, he had, at seventy-five, lost sight of the dividing line between fact and fancy, and drew on his imagination to such an extent that he almost staggered himself when he began to indulge in reminiscence.

'Log-ridin' ain't no trick at all to a man o' sperit,' said Uncle Ananias: 'There's a few places in the Kennebec where the water's too shaller to let the logs float, so we used to build a flume, an' the logs would whiz down like arrers shot from a bow. The boys used to collect by the side o' that there flume to see me ride a log down, an' I've watched 'em drop in a dead faint when I spun by the crowd; but land! you can't drownd some folks, not without you tie nail-kags to their head an' feet an' drop 'em in the falls; I've rid logs down the bilin'est rapids o' the Kennebec an' never lost my head — I remember well the year o' the gre't freshet, I rid a log from' —

'There, there, father, that'll do,' interrupted Mrs. Wiley sharply. 'I'll put the cream in the churn, an' you jest work off some o' your steam bringing the butter. It don't do no good to brag afore your own women-folks; work goes consid'able better'n stories every place 'cept the loafer's bench at the tavern!'

Why this essentially New England tale was

filmed in the Yellowstone I do not now remember, but so it was, and an author-friend on a coaching-tour had an amusing experience one day as she sat on a hotel piazza in the famous Park. She was waiting for luncheon before continuing her tour, and, as the hour approached, a company of people was observed climbing the steep bank that led up from the rushing river below. First a pretty girl in pink appeared, on her head an entirely unexpected and anachronistic pink sunbonnet; then a stalwart youth in a blue flannel shirt, a slouch hat, and his trousers tucked into his boots. More stalwart youths, red-shirted and blue-shirted, followed, and a few boys, barefooted and tangled-headed. By this time our friend decided that they must all be motion-picture actors, but what picture were they filming? Just then, another figure hove in sight, shirt-sleeved and collarless, long-faced, white-headed, with a white chin-beard and waistcoat hanging open as he limped along. He, too, was prepared for action, in high boots and close-reefed trousers, but he seemed rather 'on in years' for active labors, and, as he sank into a rocking-chair at the head of the steps, he sighed, with a twinkle in his eyes:

'Wal, boys, it's a *turrible* steep climb up here from that river o' yourn! I remember when I was on the Kennebec' — but the sentence was

never finished, for the whole company fell upon him with porch-cushions, regardless of the astonishment of the other guests.

Yes, it was the film company of 'Rose o' the River,' and our informant, on introducing herself as a friend of the author, was privileged in the afternoon to stand on the bridge below and see 'Steve Waterman' break the jam of logs.

The Saco, so dear 'to memory's shadowy moonshine,' runs through many of K. D. W.'s stories, but in 'Rose o' the River' and 'The Story of Waitstill Baxter' it is ever-present.

Hear the opening chapter, 'Saco Water,' of the last-named book:

Far, far up in the bosom of New Hampshire's granite hills, the Saco has its birth. As the mountain rill gathers strength it takes

> 'Through Bartlett's vales its tuneful way,
> Or hides in Conway's fragrant brakes,
> Retreating from the glare of day.'

Now it leaves the mountains and flows through green Fryeburg's woods and farms. In the course of its frequent turns and twists and bends, it meets with many another stream, and sends it, fuller and stronger, along its rejoicing way. When it has journeyed more than a hundred miles and is nearing the ocean, it greets the Great Ossipee River and accepts its crystal tribute. Then in its turn, the Little

Ossipee joins forces, and the river, now a splendid stream, flows onward to Bonny Eagle, to Moderation and to Salmon Falls, where it dashes over the dam like a young Niagara and hurtles, in a foamy torrent, through the ragged defile cut between lofty banks of solid rock.

Widening out placidly for a moment's rest in the sunny reaches near Pleasant Point, it gathers itself for a new plunge at Union Falls, after which it speedily merges itself in the bay and is fresh water no more.

At one of the falls on the Saco, the two little hamlets of Edgewood and Riverboro nestle together at the bridge and make one village. The stream is a wonder of beauty just here; a mirror of placid loveliness above the dam, a tawny, roaring wonder at the falls and a mad, white-flecked torrent as it dashes on its way to the ocean.

The river has seen strange sights in its time, though the history of these two tiny villages is quite unknown to the great world outside. It remembers the yellow-moccasined Sokokis as they issued from the Indian Cellar and carried their birchen canoes along the wooded shore. It was in those years that the silver-skinned salmon leaped in its crystal depth; the otter and the beaver crept with sleek wet skins upon its shore; and the brown deer came down to quench his thirst at its brink; while at twilight the stealthy forms of beaver and panther and wolf were mirrored in its glassy surface.

Time sped; men claimed the river's turbulent forces and ordered it to grind at the mill. Then houses and barns appeared along its banks, bridges were built, orchards planted, forests changed into farms, white-painted meeting houses gleamed

through the trees and distant bells rang from their steeples on quiet Sunday mornings.

. . . . . .

Now children paddled with bare feet in the river's many coves and shallows, and lovers sat on its alder-shaded banks and exchanged their vows just where the shuffling bear was wont to come down and drink.

Strange, complex things soon began to happen, and the river played its own part in some of these, for there were disastrous freshets, the sudden breaking up of great jams of logs, and the drowning of men who were engulfed in the dark whirlpool below the rapids.

In one of my sister's Line-a-Day Books the following record is set down:

Garden City, New York — 1913. Broke ground on Waitstill Baxter — Wrote Prologue.

It appears from the Diary that she worked on the story on the ship that carried her and her husband abroad that spring, continued it in Belfast, Ireland, and also in London, later in the season, the final entry being:

Wednesday, April 30, 1913 — *York Hotel* — W. B. finished at 1 A. M.

Sir Ernest Hodder-Williams, of the British publishing firm of Hodder & Stoughton, read the manuscript soon after its completion and wrote to its author at once that he considered it 'a winner from start to finish.' It has not been

a 'winner' in the sense of becoming what is colloquially called a 'best-seller,' but there can be no question, I think, that it is by far the most complete and best constructed work that my sister ever wrote and shows that her powers as an artist were constantly gaining. Although the story seems to have flowed easily from her pen when once it was begun, it had been long prepared for. Two of our Maine neighbors, the artist, Mr. Gibeon Bradbury, and the lawyer, Mr. Joel Marshall, were perfect storehouses of ancient district lore, and Kate delighted to listen to their chronicles and tales. Her notebooks hold many of 'Uncle Joel's' anecdotes, and from both antiquarians she gained a fairly complete knowledge of early York County history and especially of that extraordinary 'State o' Maine Prophet,' Jacob Cochran,[1] who spoke, according to local tradition, 'as if the Lord of Hosts had given him inspiration; as if the angels were pouring words into his mouth just for him to utter.'

Jacob Cochran, the *deus ex machina* of 'Waitstill,' suddenly appeared in the villages along the Saco about 1820, no one knew why, or from whence, and made his first impression as a preacher at a child's funeral. The neighborhood had for some time been greatly excited by a religious revival, so the ground was all pre-

[1] Jacob Cochran, b. Enfield, N.H., 1782.

pared for his reception. He claimed divine inspiration for all his sayings and aimed to free the stiff religion of the day from all formality, adding lively singing, marching, clapping, and whirling in circles to his services, these innovations often resulting in swoons and hysterical outbursts among his converts when they were fully 'Cochranized.'

'Cochranism' and the 'Cochran Craze' are well known in New England annals, and my sister studied the man and his ministrations not only in oral tradition, but in the New England books with which her study shelves were stored, — 'Saco Valley Settlements and Families' (Ridlon), 'The History of Buxton, Maine' (J. M. Marshall), 'Maine Wills,' 'York County Families,' Abbott's 'History of Maine,' and Mr. H. M. Sylvester's series of 'Maine Coast Romances.'

Saco Water comes again into the tale when the author writes:

> There were days, and moonlight nights too, when strange sights and sounds of quite another nature could have been noted by the river as it flowed under the bridge that united the two little villages.
>
> Issuing from the door of the Riverboro Town House, and winding down the hill through the long row of teams and carriages that lined the roadside, came a procession of singing men and singing women. Convinced of sin, but entranced with promised pardon; spiritually intoxicated by the

flowing eloquence of the latter-day prophet they were worshipping, the band of Cochranites moved down the road, and across the bridge, dancing, swaying, waving handkerchiefs and shouting hosannas.

God watched, and listened, knowing that there would be other prophets, true and false, in the days to come, and other processions following them; and the river watched and listened too, as it hurried on towards the sea.

If we were to write out a cast of the principal characters in 'Waitstill Baxter,' we should describe them, as, first:

Jacob Cochran, An influence, not a presence; a self-deluded prophet, drawn to evil practices by his own success.

Ivory Boynton, New England schoolmaster, son of one of Cochran's converts, his life clouded by his father's fall from grace.

Lois Boynton, Ivory's mother, her mind weakened by her husband's defection and following of 'free love' practices.

Deacon Foxwell Baxter, A 'monument of extraordinary, unbelievable, colossal meanness.'

Patty Baxter, Delightful, red-haired Patty, who felt 'like a new piece of snappy white elastic' on the morning that we first meet her.

Waitstill Baxter, 'A bit of Plymouth Rock, on the landside, mind you, with earth in the crevices, and flowers blooming all over it, hiding the granite.'

Widow Tillman, 'A reg'lar syreen,' who eventually married the Deacon and in so doing avenged all the wrongs of his three previous wives.

Uncle Bart, The joiner, village oracle on the 'bringing up of wives.'

Bill Dunham, Revolutionary veteran and gossip at the Brick Store, with his bloody tales of his encounters with the 'Husshons.'

Timothy Grant, Parish Clerk and 'entymologist,' who discourses upon 'critters' and 'hypocritters,' 'two words that start from the same root an' branch out diff'rent.'

The 'entymologist' is an especial favorite of mine, and I delight in his oracular explanations, as when he answered Rish Bixby who wanted to know why the 'dead languages' were so called.

'Because all them that ever spoke 'em has perished off the face o' the land,' said Timothy. 'Dead an' gone they be, lock, stock and barrel; yet there was a time when Latins an' Crustacians an' Hebrews an' Prooshans an' Australians an' Simesians was chatterin' away in their own tongues, an' so pow'ful that they was wallopin' the whole earth, you might say.'

There is a child, too, in 'Waitstill Baxter,' one of those manly little fellows my sister loved who 'warm and yet cool our hearts as we think of what we were and what in young clothes hoped to be.'

There is an unconsidered lover or two also in the book, although Cephas Cole, Patty's adorer, is a distinctly original creation, and there is an Aunt Abby whose incisive comments upon woman and the world, and whose pious gossip on the way to 'meeting,' give a tang of seasoning to the New England flavor of the book.

Begun in New York, continued in Belfast, Ireland, completed in London, 'Waitstill Baxter' is yet as distinctly a product of Maine as her rocks and her pine-trees, her mayflowers and her rivers.

Men may come and men may go, but Saco Water still tumbles tumultuously over the dam and rushes over the Edgewood Bridge on its way to the sea; and still it listens to the story of to-day that will sometime be the story of yesterday.

CHAPTER XVII

'THE BOOKS DID IT!

IN the first chapter of this little book, which is written at my sister's often-repeated request, I warned my possible public that it was not to be a biography in any sense of the word, and that it must be read, 'not for any annotation of facts, but for a sound of vanished voices.'

Merely to lift the cover of one of K. D. W.'s books of travel is, to me, like opening a music-box, for, as by some magic power, the gay melodies at once come tripping out, as full of song and laughter as were her own happy memories.

'A Cathedral Courtship,' 'Penelope's English, Scottish, and Irish Experiences,' 'Penelope's Postscripts' (which last-named volume Kate called 'rather a nice book, but far too little read') — these made her what the 'Spectator' called her, 'one of the most successful of the ambassadors between America and Great Britain.'

And why was this, you wonder? Rabelais could give the answer and he did so when he wrote, —

'One inch of joy surmounts of grief a span,
Because to laugh is proper to the man.'

A stately, gaitered, and aproned English Bishop told us one day, 'over there,' that he alarmed the palace with his laughter when he read the 'Penelopes,' and it is and has been, ever since the world began, so much easier to find Rabelais's 'span of grief' than his 'inch of joy,' that we cannot but be glad when we come upon it, unawares. What we are wont to call 'Rabelaisian laughter,' however, is by no means what is evoked by Kate Douglas Wiggin's delicate perception of differences, her subtle use of the foils when one simply cries out '*Touché*' and springs back, unhurt; it is rather a smile, a chuckle, a gurgle of real enjoyment.

'In the new era of peace-making on which the world has entered,' says an American critic, 'a kindly humor will be one of the most essential lubricators of the machinery of peace-keeping and Mrs. Wiggin's writings have contributed very considerably toward this end when the relations of Great Britain and America are under consideration.'

The lady herself little thought that her books of travel could play so important a rôle, for all she did in writing them, she said, was to 'cast a happy, careless, fresh eye on the enchanting scenes amid which she was living.'

In a letter to me from North Malvern, England (1892, I believe), she wrote:

I have finished the first draft of 'Cicely's English Experiences' [1] and rewritten and copied the first half. I think it will be eighteen to twenty thousand words, long enough for a small book with illustrations, if Houghton and Mifflin agree, but I want a few hundred dollars for it in magazine form, first. I enclose a draft of the headings. The numbers really only indicate sections, not chapters, containing five hundred to one thousand words each. There are no profound and searching analyses of English national traits, you may be sure, and nothing new, probably. I frisk in my usual light-footed way through the several subjects.

This is what we mean, I believe, when we speak of 'making for righteousness with a light touch,' and this light touch 'Penelope' always had. Kate had written to us in regard to the book a week or two earlier, as follows:

NORTH MALVERN, *Aug. 23rd*

DEAR FAMILY:

My head and eyes are bothersome, but I'll try to get down a few words every other day and a letter will grow in time. I am missing my exercise now, for I will not go out till afternoon, for fear I lose the thread of my work, and it has just begun to rain hard.

At seven o'clock every fair night, I take my rug and go out on the hill just opposite the door of the Inn, and after climbing as high among the rocks as I

[1] Afterward *Penelope's English Experiences.*

have strength to go, sit there to look down over two counties, scores of towns and villages and two great cathedrals. Kingsley's haunting poem of 'Airly Beacon' always comes to me as I gaze and I sing it to myself in the half-dusk,

'Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh, the pleasant sight to see
Shires and towns from Airly Beacon,
While my love climb'd up to me.'

Alas! nothing so romantic ever happens to me — nobody at all climbs up, and I climb down to supper at half-past seven, or later, for my landlady declines to give it to me until seven forty-five or eight. I do not complain, Heaven knows, for I thus get a cut off the bicyclers' joints and a nip of the bicyclers' vegetables for very much less cost than an independent dinner.

Mrs. Gwynn is very kind to me. I don't think a lady has ever stopped here before, that's my private opinion, and it's a queer life. Sometimes I do not speak from morning till night, save a few words to Willis, the waiter. My tongue gets far too much exercise, however, the principal part of the year and nothing could be better for me than this. I am much stronger than in London, though still troubled with headaches and languor too often.

KATE

My own feeling for the Scottish and Irish 'Penelopes' and 'The Diary of a Goose Girl' is, naturally enough, an especially ardent one, for I accompanied their author through all the journeys from which the three books grew.

Our first social season in Edinburgh — for we had been there in earlier years as travellers — began before we had returned from delivering our letters of introduction and continued in ever-widening circles after the first stone had been dropped into the pool. Now that I think of it, it couldn't have been a stone at all, for that would have sunk at once; it must have been a shuttlecock and gone on skipping across the waters, propelled by the battledore of good fortune.

Stone or shuttlecock — it doesn't matter a whit; wherever we went, to teas, or luncheons, or dinners, we met delightful people and those delightful people introduced us to more delightful people, and those d.p.'s to still more d.p.'s, and so on, in an enchanting arithmetical progression, very different from the one I toiled over in my school-days.

'The books did it!' as my sister always said.

There is an old, old story, told among the Redskins of the North, of a mighty hero of other days against whom all strength, all subtlety, all force of arms, was powerless, but who was finally conquered and brought into complete subjection by the magic spells of Wasis, the baby. Deep in the heart of the ancient myth there lies a truth as old as time, as new as yesterday — the compelling power of childhood among all peoples, in all ages, in all countries.

K. D. W. AND N. A. S.
Edinburgh, 1897

Not only to the eternal child himself, but to his interpreters do we bow our heads, and in this century, above all others, his prophets are held in honor.

As the children in 'The Birds' Christmas Carol' first endeared Kate Douglas Wiggin to the American public, so earnest little Timothy and bewitching Lady Gay unlocked for her all sorts of portals — cottage doors, middle-class entrances, and castle gateways across the water.

The 'Christmas Carol' has been the prime favorite, perhaps, of all my sister's books in this country; in Great Britain it stands second to 'Timothy's Quest,' and it was, in the beginning, as the chronicler of this small hero's adventures that the authoress was best known in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin society, while, once introduced, her international stories cemented the bonds of friendship. During Charles Dickens's visit to Boston in 1842, he said at a Birthday Dinner at Papanti's Hotel: 'At every new act of kindness on the part of the American public, I think to myself, That's for Oliver! — I should not wonder if that were meant for Smike! — I have no doubt that is intended for Nell! And thinking these things I have become a much happier, certainly, but a more sober and retiring man than I ever was before.'

'The books did it!' — and for my sister,

seated on what she would herself have styled one of the lower hills of literature, as well as for the immortal Charles upon his mountain peak, the love of the public for the children of their dreams made them not only much happier, but more sober, because to whom much is given, of him also much will be required.

The three of us, my sister, my brother-in-law, and I, had rather unusual opportunities for observations in the Land o' Cakes, for although Mr. Riggs was an old traveller to the British Isles he had never been a householder there until we went over with him and in the springs of three successive seasons occupied furnished cottages in Fifeshire, in Argyllshire, and in Perthshire. Life in hotels and lodging-houses is of little value in any land for gaining a real idea of its people, and one always wonders how foreigners visiting this country compile their bulky volumes of observations on America, when they see it merely from the windows of fashionable hotels, taxicabs, and Pullman cars.

My sister and I were assured that we were going to know all about Scotland, past and present, when the white-haired retainer, sent us from an Edinburgh Intelligence Office, stalked up the path to our little stone cottage in Fifeshire, and when we recalled that she was to sleep in a box-bed in the kitchen, and that our fowls were to be roasted on a spit, run by clock-

work, we rejoiced greatly, saying one to the other, 'Hurrah! Now this *is* the real thing!' Subsequently we had no doubt whatever that it was the real thing and perhaps too much of it, an opinion that we frequently murmured to each other, privately, when we 'kept house' in Ireland. We were not always in sympathy, it is needless to say, with British ways of cooking, of bed-making or of arranging furniture, but as to the latter, no member of our family since the days of my mother's father, the peripatetic 'Jones Dyer, Gentleman,' has ever been able to endure the sight of any room more than a month without changing the position of every article in it. My ever-spirited little mother often used to look up from her work on some rainy morning during her winters in New York and say, 'Let's go over to Kate's and change all the furniture in the drawing-room. She said last week she was tired to death of the way the things looked.' Of course, I would telephone my sister and call a cab at once, enchanted by the very idea of changing furniture, and she would invariably meet us at her door with ardent embraces and, 'Oh, how splendid! Now let's call Gertrude and Judith [or Agnes and Ella, as the case might be] and move the piano *away* over to the other side of the room and then we can see how the sofa will look in the corner!'

Moving furniture, then, in England, Scot-

land, or Ireland had no terrors for us, only a delicious joy, and I really think that the little mother and her daughters could they have had the opportunity, would have relished a permanent existence in a furniture-van, or a pantechnicon, as they call it on the other side.

Arthur Bartlett Maurice says in an article on 'The Literary Invasion of Europe': 'The first American story-teller to invade Europe was Washington Irving, who, nearly a century ago, began to write tales of rural England with a grace and insight surpassed by none of his British contemporaries.' In a map appended to the article, labelled 'The Invasion of Europe by American Writers of Fiction,' the name of Kate Douglas Wiggin is writ large over the

> '. . . snug little island,
> The right little, tight little island,'

and over its neighbor, Ireland, as well, and so thoroughly did Kate identify herself with her own 'Penelope' that many of her friends addressed her for years by that name, beginning with dear Mr. Howells who always insisted that she had painted her own portrait in the 'radiant Penelope'!

During the seasons that we lived in England and Scotland, Ireland only received a flying visit, now and then, in connection with Mr. Riggs's business interests, but the public began

to clamor for an Irish 'Penelope' to complete the series, and one summer (1899) Kate and I made an extended stay in Erin's Isle as a prelude to more detailed and intimate studies of the life and the people. Upon hearing of the proposed visit, an English author expressed his approval of the scheme on patriotic grounds, wittily saying that if the projected book remained unwritten, Ireland would for once have a real grievance, and questions would be asked in the House which Mr. Balfour would find it difficult to answer.

As might have been expected in that hospitable land, our customary good fortune attended us. Killarney came first, and the second day's experiences in that well-known haunt of tourists will illustrate the varieties of life that came under the eyes of 'Penelope,' for she spent the morning walking to the bog with a daughter of the soil, watching the turf-cutting and helping to pack the sods in her new friend's creel, and the afternoon with Lady Kenmare, in the lovely Italian gardens of Killarney House. The Countess was a great reader in all the modern languages, it seemed, and among the well-worn volumes upon her shelves were found 'A Cathedral Courtship,' 'Timothy's Quest,' and the varied experiences of 'Penelope' in England and Scotland.

The stay in Killarney was all too brief, for

the people in high and in low life are invariably interesting, and even from a street corner one may see many sights, both new and strange; but the days of travel for this especial book were almost over and we left the Lake for Valencia Island, arriving there in time for a regatta, whose Milesian novelties should have had a place in the Irish volume. Then followed a leisurely driving tour through the south, west, and northwest of Ireland, stopping wherever the literary fancy prompted and everywhere charmed by the magnificent scenery, the quaint dress and speech, the lovely children, the picturesque though doubtless uncomfortable stone cabins, the courtesy of the people and the thousand details, pleasant and painful, which make up Irish life.

The Irish 'Penelope' was very successful, and so delighted the people of whom it treated that many an Irish Member of Parliament was to be seen the summer it appeared, going to a debate on this or that subject with the green-covered, shamrock-bordered volume peeping out of his pocket. The book represented not only the impressions of many journeys to Ireland, visits in country houses, jaunts through the green isle among the people, a lifelong acquaintance with Irish tales and songs and ballads, but serious study of its history and folklore. The story was charming — that goes

without saying, I think, to those who knew 'Penelope' — and it was not only witty, romantic, and gracefully written, but it showed a nice appreciation of Irish character and a thorough knowledge of historic background.

At the height of the Irish success, K. D. W. was asked if she was not going to take 'Penelope' on a Continental tour?

'Indeed not,' she replied. 'There is a case of many possibilities for which I shall not assume the burden.'

'But Penelope could hardly be a very confusing problem,' remarked the caller.

'The trouble does not lie with her, to be sure,' answered my sister. 'She is a well-conducted young woman who can be trusted anywhere. She would never get out of hand. Only, I have already been made aware, by letter, of the fact that there are other corners of the United Kingdom that are worth exploring by an American girl — Wales, for instance. I should not dare to cross the Channel before Penelope had had her experiences in the Welsh, and after that, I suppose, in the Devon dialect, but she is married and settled now; her travelling days are over, and you can learn of her fate in "Penelope's Postscripts."'

One of the letters of which she speaks was doubtless that, in verse, received from her Private Poet Laureate while she was sojourning in

Germany in the summer of 1913 with her husband:

For Penelope's card, from the Hub of the Fatherland,
Olaf offers his thanks, and although he would rather land
On American shores than attempt to grow wiser
By turning again to the soil of the Kaiser —
As to which, in his mind, some faint memory lingers
Of young men with long hair and young maids with short fingers; —
Yet, had he the bliss through that Empire to travel
Beside her, he doubts not that she would unravel
Much that puzzled him once, and correct or confirm any
Wrong or right views he has form'd about Germany.

In the meantime, the duty she owes to Society
Will doubtless induce her to note a variety
Of German antiquities, oddities, gestures,
Occupations, amusements, equipments and vestures,
With a view to a book that may mend the relations
And add to the harmless amusement of nations;
Nor will she — I venture to warrant — be haunted
By unreasoning fears, which — I doubt not — have daunted
Less valorous writers and serv'd to deter many
Persons from printing their thoughts upon Germany.

H. J.

If 'Penelope' was popular abroad, she was overwhelmingly so at home, and early in her career a club was formed to follow her in her English adventures, its members believing with Wordsworth, evidently, that it was

'. . . joy enough and pride
For one hour's perfect bliss, to
Tread the grass of England.'

The 'English Penelopes' were quickly followed by the 'Scottish' and the 'Irish Penelopes' and now and then a 'Cathedral Tour Club' was heard from; while once, I remember, a Teacher's Tour was planned, to be undertaken by an organization called 'The Goose-Girls of Rural England.'

Whether the Goose-Girls ever crossed the herring-pond, I do not know, but I am sure if they did that they never enjoyed themselves more among the green lanes and the skylarks than my sister and I on that ill-managed but fascinating poultry-farm in Sussex where the original goose-girl sojourned.

The Annual Calendars and Programme Books sent by all these Clubs, the Ballad Evenings from the Scottish and Irish volumes to which she was invited, the tableaux and theatricals evolved from their pages — all these were so many concrete evidences of the hold that this international travel series held upon the public, and it was one of the joys of K. D. W.'s literary career that, in spite of the fragility of her health, she was yet able to taste to the full, before she left us, the never-cloying sweets of a success which were spontaneously rendered.

CHAPTER XVIII

'SERENDIPITY': AN AUTHOR'S MAIL-BAG

A strange volume of real life in the daily packet of the postman.
DOUGLAS JERROLD

AN eminent British author, when asked to set down his likes and dislikes in one of those biographical booklets too often presented to literary lights by their admirers, alleged his favorite occupation to be 'Serendipity.' The novel and tantalizing term immediately caught the attention of those curious in words, and was found to have been coined by Horace Walpole, who used it concerning the adventures of a certain Prince of Serendib.

This Oriental potentate, so it is related, conducted a world-wide search for a lost treasure, and, although he never found the particular object he desired, he yet came upon so many other valuable things in his travels that he considered his life well spent.

Hæc fabula docet: This fable teaches that even the perusal of a successful author's morning mail, bulky as it may be with bills, advertisements, and begging letters, may yet contain some rare gem that sparkles among the rubbish, like 'the jewel in an Ethiope's ear.'

In the pursuit of Serendipity, then, the following gems were discovered by my sister and laid away in a special case for the delight of other connoisseurs.

METROPOLIS
CHEHALLIS COUNTY
WASHINGTON TERRITORY
March 31, 18—

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

DEAR SISTER:

I see by the papers that you have published a song-book for the little ones, called 'Kindergarten Chimes.'

Will you send me a copy for use in my Sunday School work, and wait for your pay till the Great Judgment Day?

Yours in the faith.

[*I need not say that the proposal was considered too unique to be disregarded. N. A. S.*]

MRS. KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

DEAR MADAM:

In an old file of 'The Ladies' Home Journal,' lent me by a friend, I discovered a picture of you clad in a gown of old Venetian brocade which I well remember helping to make when I was an assistant in Miss Blank's dressmaking establishment, in Blank Street, London.

I was allowed by Miss Blank to work upon the bodice of the gown — my first important task — and I well remember that it was trimmed with the customer's own Venetian lace. I was greatly inter-

ested in my work because all the girls in the establishment knew about you and your writings, and I was very proud when it was completed to your satisfaction. As was the custom in Miss Blank's establishment, every assistant kept a book in which she pasted a sample of each gown she worked on, and a sample of your Venetian brocade was a feature of mine. When I left Miss Blank's, I took my book with me and made a tea-cosy from the various pieces, which I carried with me as a nurse in the Boer War.

When the war was over, I came to America to live, still attended by the tea-cosy; and now I am here on a farm in Pennsylvania with little to do but remember the past.

Hoping that this long letter has not wearied you, I am Yours respectfully

---

[*When preparations were being made in San Francisco for the World's Fair of 1915, 'The Examiner' issued an appeal to the female citizens of California to suggest candidates for a unique honor to be conferred by the Women's Board of the Exposition. This was to be an invitation to six of the most distinguished women in the world, to come to San Francisco as the guests of the Exposition, and thus, to use the words of the editorial upon the subject, 'to reflect greater glory upon the occasion by assembling in San Francisco the feminine luminaries of art, learning, and achievement.'*

Fired by the suggestion, a San Francisco matron, a graduate of the Silver Street Kindergartens under my sister, wrote at once to 'The Examiner,' as follows:]

March 1, 1914

When they come to mention the
Great Women of the World, —
Why not Kate Douglas Wiggin?

These lines she enclosed in the following letter to the object of her admiration:

Ever dear to me 'Miss Kate.'
First on the list!

I wrote and told to whom it may concern that it was not necessary for me to tell about you as I left it to the Ladies on the Committee,

And if they turn you down
I consider it a disgrace to
California!

With love to your dear self,
Hope and pray you win out! *F. P.*

[*I need not say that the members of the Women's Board at once telegraphed the invitation, evidently feeling that its omission would indeed be 'a disgrace to California.' N. A. S.*]

A Friend of Truth

[*Persons who have read Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin's story of 'Huldah, the Prophetess,' in the December number of 'Harper's Magazine,' will be interested in the following communication, which it is a pleasure to give in full, except for the omission of the writer's name:*]

GOSHEN, ELKHART COUNTY, IND., *Nov.* 26, 1895

MR. EDITOR: I wish to call your attention to a misstatement in an article about 'Hulda, the Prophetess' in the December number of Harper's Magazine. It is there stated that Pitt Packard, or W. Pitt Fessenden Packard, came to Goshen, Ind., and went into business as a pumpmaker. I have been a resident of Goshen for fifty years, and there was never a man of that name here as a pumpmaker or a maker

of anything else. In fact, there was never anybody of that name living in this town, and I've known everybody in it. There was a man named Packard here once — George Washington Packard — but he didn't make pumps at all. He had a farm about two miles from here, and sold out about ten years ago and went west.

Yours truly

RICHMOND, VA.

DEAR MRS. WIGGIN:

They've had suffragettes, poets, Japs, actors, and just regular men; the kind with illustrations and the kind without, here at High School, but we've never had a Mrs. Wiggin before. Didn't we sound like it? It was *fine* and I rekon — I don't only *rekon*, I'm Plum sure — we won't forget it. Mildred and I won't, anyway. Mildred Murray and I went out of the Assembly Hall in a hurry and waited in a little room behind it for you all. It was *awful*, we were sure Mr. Thompson would catch us (he always does) and Mildred's shoes were squeeking and we were out of breath and giggling all the time we were in there and — watching you — all thro a crack in the door.

Rekon you haven't the least idea who I am. I am the High School girl who ran after you to-day, Monday, March Twenty-fifth, 1912, on State Street, with three men scowling at me and four or five hundred girls looking on in terror while I asked you *your address* and then you only told me 'Publishers.' I hope to goodness you'll get this and *please* answer this, because it'll be awful if you don't, after all Mildred and I are going to get from

headquarters from our — *wriggling* when we get caught — which we sure will — we always do.

I love Rebecca. She's so human. Grandma specially loves the Carys and so, with the world, we say 'Long live Rebecca and the Carys!! — in *more* books!' We are going to see 'Rebecca' on the stage to-morrow night.

Now Mrs. Wiggin *please* answer my letter. You say you love *girls*. I'm at least that.

We'll never forget you. We all love you. Come again!

Very sincerely

POLLY WATERS
1912 W. H. S.
Balto.

PERSONAL

A lady of good social position, giving a dinner party on Sunday evening, January 1, would be pleased to invite one or more young ladies of respectability and social standing to attend, as, owing to prevalence of grip, some of her own friends have been obliged to regret: references required. Address ELITE, 462 Herald.

THORNWOOD,
WILLIAMSTOWN, MASS.

DEAR ELITE

I'm sorry our inability to dine with you on Sunday has put you to this trouble and expense.

Do let us know how the scheme works.

Faithfully yours
LAURENCE HUTTON

—— Georgia
March 7, 1909

'Kate Douglas Wiggin'

Dear Friend

Tho' we have never met I feel so much attached to you through your books, that I feel well enough acquainted, to write you about them, or those, I have read. 'Timothy's Quest' is undoubtedly the favorite. I have read it to sixty-seven sets of people. I speak of it this way, because numbers of friends have begged me to read it to them, and others have joined the circle, many of them having heard it eight or ten times, never tiring of hearing it. I find new beauties each time, and all with one accord wish you would write a sequel, with 'Timothy's Quest' ended. I love the book so much I have written on the fly-leaves the names of those I have read to when visiting from Connecticut to Florida. Whenever I can own all of your books, I will be happy. I now own (always) first, 'Timothy's Quest' a friend sent me from New York and the 'Birds' Christmas Carol' I have ordered no less than a hundred copies of these books for friends, after I have read them aloud, — 'Patsy,' 'Half a dozen Housekeepers,' 'The Rose of the River' (all five) the other books I hope some day to get, one at a time when I feel I can spend money to indulge my love for them. I am an old lady; sixty-two years have passed me by, I support myself with fine sewing. I have never been so busy, that I could not put aside my work to read 'Timothy's Quest,' to any friends who request my doing so, knowing when they ask, it rests me, and does them good also. I consider it as good as a sermon, and have read it

many times to friends who were disabled and could not attend church services.

I would esteem it a great favor if you with your many duties would write me and let me know if there would be any probability of your acceeding to my request and many others and give us another book with the same characters after they grow up, and what became of them, a book that can be read in an evening. I am not in a dictating humor, but only throw it out as a suggestion; a book of that length is much sought after, and when it comes from your pen will be readily grasped. I have heard that you have said there were no quotable passages in your books. I differ from you very much. We all think them full of good quotable things, I think more than any books I have read. I would rather be the writer of such books than anything I have ever known. It would be my highest ambition. I have never read 'Timothy's Quest' to the many I have spoken of that they have not said, 'Oh, I wish she would write a sequel, and tell us in her inimitable way what became of 'Timothy and Lady Gay and the rest,' and I cannot refrain from begging for such a book. I think if you answer in the negative I will be tempted to write my version of a story to read to the friends who are clamoring for something more of Timothy, Lady Gay, Samanthy, and Dave, Miss Vilda and last, but not least Jake' of course not for publication, but in answer to their supplications, but we wish for a sequel from you. I could never say the funny things you do for your characters, and the original characters say for themselves I think there was only one 'Kate Douglas Wiggin.'

If my writing to ask you is 'out of the common'

and it looks like presumption, please excuse, as I am not like any one else, and do things in an entirely different and unconventional manner, but I admire you, and wish you to know it.

Sincerely your friend

Virtue is its own Reward

NOTE: A real composition written to order on theme, 'Virtue is its own Reward,' by a boy of eight. (Sent me by his school teacher. *K. D. W.*)

A poor young man fell in love with the daughter of a rich lady who kept a candy shop. The poor young man could not marry the rich candy lady's daughter because he had not enough money to buy furniture.

A wicked man offered to give the poor young man twenty-five dollars if he would become a drunkard. The poor young man wanted the money very much, so he could marry the rich candy lady's daughter but when he got to the saloon he turned to the wicked man and said: 'I will not become a drunkard, even for great riches. Get thee behind me, Satan.'

On his way home he found a pocketbook containing a million dollars in gold. Then the young lady consented to marry him. They had a beautiful wedding, and the next day had twins. Thus you see that Virtue is its own reward.

November 29, 1909

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN
165 West 58th Street, N.Y.

DEAR MADAME AND SISTER:

I have been informed that you are entitled to all the benefits of membership in the Association of Easy Marks, of which I have the honor to be President, in that you contributed liberally out of your substance to our patron Saint, The Bald Impostor. I enclose your badge herewith, and a list of known members to date. As rapidly as new members are discovered — for many hide, modestly, their light of generosity under a bushel — you will be notified.

There are no dues, no initiation fees. When the Bald Impostor called on you and took money from you, you paid all. *He* is our active treasurer. The list of members enclosed will show you that you are in worthy company. We are all Easy Marks.

Should you know of any members not on the enclosed list, I would be glad to have their names. We want to enroll them, and congratulate them. It is seldom that so great a wave of generosity sweeps through 'Who's Who.' It is seldom that so many of the aristocracy of brains are stung by one lone man with thin sandy hair. The world should know of this Niagara of giving; it should be preserved for the ages to look up and wonder at.

Be assured that your name will not be hidden by the Association. Like mine, and like all, it will be on many lips. Other Bald Impostors, not knowing where to go for aid, will see your names and know just who are Easy. All we want is a chance to 'give up.'

Let the good work proceed! Wear your badge conspicuously. Some ladies wear them above their

philanthropic hearts, others think they look 'cute' suspended from the belt, flopping gracefully in the ill wind that blows no-one good. But we do not care how it is worn. Only wear it.

We expect to give a big dinner of the association — as soon as we can be assured of the attendance of our patron saint, the Bald Impostor. We look forward to that day hopefully.

Yours truly
ELLIS PARKER BUTLER
President Assn. of Easy Marks
Member No. 1.

Badge enclosed

I
AM AN
EASY MARK
ARE YOU?
BE ONE
IT FEELS
FINE
#23

Members — Association of Easy Marks

[*A list of members is here appended, which is omitted, lest another Bald Impostor take advantage of their innocence. N. A. S.*]

Motto of Association

'Another of the Same Kind is born every minute.'

Crest of Association

A lemon, *or*, as a field, bearing the word *Stung*, *azure* in high relief. (Members are allowed to have the crest engraved on their stationery.)

Address all communications to
Ellis Parker Butler, President.

December 10, 1909

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN, H. M. P.
New York.

DEAR MEMBER NO. 23:

As it is characteristic of all Easy Marks to give freely more than is asked, and as your letter appeals for a $10. title of Vice-President, I have the pleasure of conferring upon you a $20. title, as I feel that the honor of your publishers is at stake and I cannot permit one who coughed up to an alleged brother of the firm, to bear a title less noble than *High and Mighty Protectress*.

I therefore confer that title upon you, and hereunto set my hand and seal.

ELLIS PARKER BUTLER
Member No. 1
President A. of E. M.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA
Feb. 21st, 1887

DEAR MISS KATE:

I send you a jewel for your collection in the shape of a romance, written by my ten-year-old niece.

As ever, affectionately

A. W.

THE CUPLE

A fine young cuple were walking up the shore one day talking of poleticks. Mis Crane sed I think Blane will be elekted. Mr. White said I think he will too. I think when too people like Blane they ought to get married.

She said I do to. He said shall we? I love you so! She

said do you love me really? Then he said will you be mine? She studered and then replyed I don't know. Well — yes.

The cuple walked up to the hotel and imbrased.

Then he glided down the winding stares and sent a telegram to his mama and papa to come to their wedding.

Then he went up stares and they imbrased and said they loved each other and would always vote for Blane because he got them marrid.

Winnie Warner

MANCHESTER, N.H.
Nov. 10, 1899

TO KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

DEAR MADAM:

Please find enclosed 25¢ for the New York Kindergarten Association. It gives me great pleasure to comply with your request, for I was very thankful for your autograph. How much nicer and more ladylike it makes you appear to grant such a request. I feel better acquainted with you, and feel more like reading your books. Now Mrs. Blank V. Blank[1] is different. She is quite *hogish* and refuses all requests. I don't feel like reading her books.

Yours sincerely
(Signed) IDA I. CAMDEN
Age 13

Monday, May 18, 19—
NUMBER 941 LINDEN STREET
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

MRS. WIGGIN:

I am Mr. Jordan, Will Jordan. I am the same one that you used to see at Mrs. Blake's House, in

[1] Name of celebrated lady omitted.

San Francisco, I would like to remind you of some things, and also ask some favors of you, and also of all your lady and girl friends through you, and when I say all of your friends, I mean all of them, and everywhere. Will you, and your friends, please dress for the halloweens and for all of them, and as follows? While you are in the house, wear standing collars, and turn back cuffs, or, turn down collars and inside cuffs, but, if you go out on the street, wear also either thread gloves, or dressed kid gloves, either outside or inside of the sleeves. Also, this same style of dress would be equally suitable, for seeing, or doing any of the following things. For any circus, or any real fire, or any race, or any tournament, or any disaster, or any sham fight, or any killing contest, or to see anything killed, or any melodrama, or to see any animals trained, or broken, or for any hunting, or fishing excursion, or for any Wild West Show, or for any horses show. This is what I call, the 1st Style of Dress.

Also, if you, or your friends should ever do, or see any real fights, or tragedies, please dress for that, and as follows. Wear veils, if it is possible, turn down collars, turn back cuffs, and undressed kid gloves, either outside or inside of the sleeves. This also, is what I call, the 2nd Style of Dress.

Mrs. Wiggin, if you, and your friends, would do all this for me, it would oblige me very much. I have asked you, and your friends, to do this for me, because, I think so much of having ladies, and girls, thoroughly dressed, at such times, either to do such things themselves, or to see them done. Mrs. Wiggin, you know me, you remember me, and Your Mother and Sister and I and My Mother, used to meet at Mrs. Blakes House in San Francisco.

I will say again, that if you and your friends, would all do this for me, it would oblige me, very much, for the reason I have given. When a woman, or a girl, is dressed in either of these ways, she is to me, at least as well dressed, and as thoroughly dressed for such things, as she would be if she was dressed in the usual way. I enclose a stamp for reply.

Mrs. Wiggin, please don't return this letter, or please don't write and tell me that you don't wish to do all this, because I want you to do it. You know me, and remember me, therefore, I want to ask these favors of you, and your friends.

(Signed) W. H. JORDAN

From a 'Quillcote' Neighbor

[*In answer to an offer for her property*]

MR. H. P. K.

DEAR SIR:

In reply to your letter I must say that Mr. Johnson's offer is not the slightest temptation to me to part with my place, neglected as it is. I consider it worth $1,000 (One Thousand Dollars) to breathe the same air as Mrs. Riggs one month in the year.

With regards to all

BLANK S. BLANK

OFFICE OF THE WILD ROSE BALM
—— MASS.

MRS. KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN,

DEAR MADAM:

Our Mr. Hendricks was among your hearers last evening and he remarked that as you stepped upon

the stage you shed abroad an atmosphere of such elegance and refinement as showed you to be a person accessible to beauty in any form.

Those who have read your moving little tales (and who has not?) know you to be entirely above the use of cosmetics, but it would be both laudable and legitimate if you should use some simple emollient and thereby preserve those charms with which Nature has endowed you so lavishly.

We send you herewith 6 bots of the W. R. B. If you should feel you could give us a testimonial we should be deeply grateful but in any event dear Madam we shall be glad to have served you.

Yours respec'y & admiringly

THE W. R. B. Co.

per HENDRICKS

—— WISCONSIN, *February 8th*, 1910

MESSRS. HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND CO.,
Publishers,

GENTLEMEN:

I would like to write a sequel of 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm' published by you; Provided of course no other has written one, and also provided I could arrange with you to publish it for me.

Will you kindly tell me if you would undertake this if in your Judgement the sequel was every whit as good as Rebecca and it was about the same sized body and binding? Could you tell me if Rebecca, met with a good sale, and what were the royalties paid on it?

There are so many characters left at the post, as it were, in this book; that I believe I can make even a more interesting story than Rebecca, and not do

violence to the Authors description of their characteristics.

An early reply will be very much appreciated by

Yours very truly

HENRY A. WHITE

September 26th, 1889
SAN YSIDRO

MRS. KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN
San Francisco, California

MUCH ESTEEMED MADAM:

Will you be kind enough to give us your opinion regarding the following?

The Browns, Smiths and Jones are three foreign families living here in Mexico. The Browns' child was to be baptized, and they had thought of inviting a number of friends, but owing to unfriendly feeling among the different families, could not well arrange the company.

Brown explains the matter to them all, then he asks Mrs. Smith if she as an intimate friend would do him the favor to ask and arrange with a certain Chinaman Hotel Keeper, to bake a few fine cakes. She most cheerfully complied, and also informed Brown that she wanted to make a cake herself for the Baby, and if Brown would send her 2 lbs raisins, and one pound of butter, she would bake a nice fruit cake. Brown sent the butter and raisins.

Mrs. Jones, a friend also of Browns, and a next door neighbor to Mrs. Smith said she wanted to furnish a cake, all said in the most friendly terms.

On the afternoon of the 19th inst., Brown sent servant for the cakes. They all came together, those of Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Jones, and those the Chinaman furnished, along with numerous boquets of flowers.

The baptism took place that evening; present, only Godfather and Godmother. The following morning (the 20th inst.) the Browns, so happy knowing their son was a Christian, concluded as there was a great abundance of cake they would send it around among their friends, to enjoy also the baptismal cake. Among others to the Smiths and Joneses.

Gathering together the dishes of Smith and Jones and writing a polite note stating the cakes were all very fine and much enjoyed, they sent them, enclosing also to each Mrs. Smith, and Jones the usual baptismal cards, custom of the country.

Mrs. Smith and Jones sent the cake all back without one word of explanation. In sending the cake Mrs. Brown sent two pieces of each cake furnished by Smiths, Jones and Chinaman.

Now some one has been guilty of committing a breach of Etiquette; who was it?

The Browns are very much hurt as they meant no harm.

The Smiths and Jones Family are hurt that they should have their own baking returned for them to eat.

Please excuse all of us for our molesting you, but your answer and decision we greatly wish, it will settle all difficulties for us in our colony.

Trusting you will not feel annoyed by our intrusion, we are all truly your friends, the Browns, Smiths and Jones's and all the rest.

Very truly and respectfully yours

(Signed) EULOGIO N. CAMPBELL, M.D.

SAN YSIDRO
ESTADO DE SINALOA
MEXICO

6 Chestnut Street
—— Georgia
March 6, 1913

Dear Mrs. Wiggin:

Seeing a short sketch of you in 'The House-Wife,' I am encouraged to write you, on an important subject. My daughter, off at college, will graduate from the College Classical Course, in May, the subject of her oration is Sources of Power in the World.

Will you please be kind to send me some thoughts on said subject? I will pay you whatever you charge.

Anxiously awaiting your reply, I remain

Obligingly
Yours
Juliet E. Moses

51 Myrtle Street
Hoboken, N.J.
Aug. 14, 1914

Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin,
'Quillcote,' Hollis, Maine.

My dear Mrs. Wiggin:

I am a little girl in the eighth grade of school and have been reading your 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm,' and think it just grand and almost as nice as 'Little Women.' Everybody at our house from my little brother to my grandmother just love it; in fact we play it after supper in the living-room most every night. Mother plays Miranda Sawyer and a dear old Mirandy she makes too, Daddy plays Mr. Aladdin, and I, Rebecca, the rest of the family impersonating Uncle Jerry, Minnie Smelly and all the others. What fun we do have! I just love to say,

'It is a real journey when you carry a night-gown.' When I play Rebecca I try to imitate the real Rebecca played by Miss Taliaferro last year at the Republic Theatre. I have a Rebecca Calendar, three copies of the book, a picture of her and lots of Rebecca things.

It was mother's suggestion, or in fact the whole family's, that I should write to you, for we are all very anxious to see your handwriting and to see your picture. May we have either? You see we cannot tell what you look like. Are you tall or short, fat or thin? Do you write scrawly or round?

Now, Mother, Daddy, Grandmother, Grandaddy, Norman, Olivia, and Alice all wish to thank you very much, Mrs. Wiggin, for Rebecca and her book which has brought cheer and happiness to hundreds of people all over.

Yours respectfully

ALICE HAWSON

4208 PARKSIDE AVE.
May 5, 1917

MY DEAR MRS. WIGGIN:

The School of Practice and the Normal School of Philadelphia had the honor of having you come and give us a reading from 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.'

I am a pupil of the School of Practice. The day that you visited us I happened to be punished for a small offense. The biggest disgrace of our school is to be put under the clock in the Normal School's main corridor. My teacher put me under the clock for the whole day.

By the way the students were rushing around, I

knew something unusual was to happen. Afterwards I heard the elevator lady tell the janitor that Mrs. Wiggin was reading to the girls. I nearly fell off my chair, I was so surprised. Really, Mrs. Wiggin, I don't believe I have ever been so disappointed in my life before, when I heard that you were there and that I was not to hear you.

Of course the reading must have been splendid but there was another reason that I wished to hear an author read. My greatest ambition is to be an author myself. I love to tell and write stories and I always get 'Excellent' in compositions in school. Poetry to me is beautiful and I write some; of course no one ever sees it but I love to write poems.

I dearly love Rebecca and many times have I transformed her into a real little girl and have played and talked to her for hours. I read the book and then Rebecca steps out and we have a lovely time together. Patsy, another one of your books is splendid. It is so sad, though, that I always cry when I read it.

I saw 'Mother's Carey's Chickens' Saturday and it was lovely. I can imagine how proud you must feel to see your book being played. I was telling the friend that was with me that if I do become an author and write lovely things, that if it is ever dramatized I shall buy a seat in the top gallery and more or less disguise myself. Then I shall study the people's faces, they are so interesting up there and I would like to see the effect my book has on them. I do so hope that I shall write. I am going to try very hard.

I have at least been a little consoled by seeing you. I saw you when you were coming down from reading; may be you saw me but I doubt it. I was

sitting in the corridor 'under the clock,' just across from the stairs and near the elevator.

I hope with all my heart that I shall meet you some day.

Respectfully
ELIZABETH SHAFFER (14 yrs.)

CLEVELAND, OHIO
November 13, 1915

MRS. KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN
Hollis, Maine

MY DEAR MRS. WIGGIN:

Looking over 'Penelope's Progress' in our Public Library — the volume in Highland plaid — I noticed both columns of the issuing slips were full of late entries, though the book came out seventeen years ago. Examining other books of yours I observed they were all in active circulation. This suggested sending some of the well-filled original slips to you which I am doing through the eager coöperation of Mr. Brett, the Librarian, as shown by his enclosed letter to me.

I thought the sight of so many drawings, each indicating half a dozen readers, would tend to relieve the 'insistent and persistent' headaches to which you refer. Such aches, being obviously amenable to treatment, will hardly insist or persist against these prescriptions, in doses, not homeopathic but expansively allopathic.

But Mr. Brett, entering into the spirit of my plan, with his expert knowledge and characteristic thoroughness, has gone back to the beginning of your authorship and caused the enclosed table to be prepared showing the total number of your vari-

ous books bought by the Library, 4156, and the number now in use, 2397, and the number worn out 1759. Our books are repaired and rebound as long as possible and are only 'dead' when thumbed to pieces. The Librarian is entitled to all the credit for this table, as I did not suggest it or know that data existed for such an exhibition.

It would appear that if all your lovers were laid side by side they would make a Thanksgiving corduroy road for you from Hollis to New York, not more wooden than such roads should be for safety. The customary side-stringers in this highway could be excluded. The one central invisible chord would easily prevent sliding or sagging.

My wife says the cultivation of so much devotion to you by so many men has one basic objection; it will create an absentee 'loverism' which will require a new Foundation with a whole corps of experts to eradicate. I do not share this apprehension. This is the day of long distances and great ranges. Why discriminate, therefore, against Cupid in the realm where he was supreme before Foundations or Experts?

Mrs. Blank joins in warm thanks for your most agreeable letter which we had no right to expect — and in your own writing. How deliciously sane that you do not consider it necessary to write an illegible hand! The enclosures are interesting as they help us to see the kindergartner at home in her own house, and such a house — and barn, all open to the Dorcas with no 'charge for de rent.' I am sure the happiest child gets no more pleasure than you do.

The Dorcas exhibitions of love and good cheer are just like the author of the Birds' Christmas Carol. While waiting yesterday for Mr. Brett in the li-

brary, I re-read most of that book in an edition which says on the fly leaf '540th thousand.' The story is an epitome of the spirit of John's Gospel and Epistles, touched by the hand of genius.

Very sincerely

Letter from a Handwriting Expert

[*A few lines of my sister's writing, unsigned, of course, were sent to an Expert by her husband, without her knowledge, the results, especially in Paragraph II, giving him enduring delight. N. A. S.*]

April 29, 1897.

The specimen No. 1, indicates the following character in the writer:

I. Intellectually:

A lady of high refinement and strong individuality — the latter, to a slight extent perhaps, studied and designed. Nevertheless, she is distinguished and apart from the 'common herd,' by some special gifts, probably one in particular, and that one an expressive art: music, for instance, with a strong dramatic instinct. I perceive a very large idealism — with its concomitants — love of the beautiful, imagination, and intuitive insight. Accompanying and accentuating this supreme quality is a sensuousness of appreciation, or temperamental force and passion.

This lady has the power to become an artist of the first rank. She has only to compel circumstances to aid her. Her efforts should be made in some dramatic direction. The contemplative and reflective arts are not her vocation. She has discriminating

and exacting tastes but is not capable of an extended study of minutiæ.

II. Morally:

The moral faculties will always control her success, aiding or retarding it from a material point of view — because they are forcefully interwoven with the intellectual aims. She has been taught a lofty standard and the 'personal equation' will enter into all she does. Her affections, for example, are deep — passionate and pervasive, and of great loyalty and continuance. It is quite possible for them to subserve her art; but they may become paramount and control it, — whatever it may be. Her temper is passionate also, but not aggressive. She is of profound feeling throughout. Her self-valuation is high — not egotistical, exactly — but a strong 'I AM'ity. She will not submit to be ignored. Her power of will is determined and persistent. It is too imperious for outside control . . . she is incapable of being coerced. There is a dogged and determined individualism in all that she thinks and does.

III. Physically:

The constitutional stamina is very great. She sustains herself through tremendous crises with potent vitativeness (love of living). The temperament is the sanguine-bilious, for the most part. Her danger is an over-indulgence in the emotions and its penalties are chiefly laid on the heart and circulatory system.

Handwriting Expert

ISABELLA THOBURN COLLEGE
LUCKNOW

DEAR MRS. WIGGIN:

We are three Indian girls who just love your books and so we've decided to write you a few lines.

The oldest among us is Helen Mayadas and she is in charge of a Kindergarten here. She has some of the dearest children in the class and oh! how often I wish Polly Oliver was here to tell them stories!

My name is Wilhelmina Vidyavati Singh and some day I hope to take my A.B. degree. I would have got it in March except that I've been ill and had to rest a year and a half. At present I am an invalid with curvature of the spine but in twelve days I shall be up — at last!

I think Helen will go over to her room presently. The Kindergarten is held from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M., I think. I am in Mother's room on my chair — Marmee is the housekeeper of this establishment and it's lovely to have her here. O! I'm sorry for the girls who haven't their mothers with them.

I was just going to read 'Polly Oliver's Problem' for the hundredth time, when I decided I'd write this letter. You understand girls so well that I'm sure you will not mind our writing to you. Oh! that I could tell you how much your books help me. Sometimes when I feel impatient and it is so irksome to lie flat on my back — perfectly still — I think of 'the candle called Patience' and it helps me so much.

I wish you were out here. I know you'd love our beautiful country. Lucknow's a very interesting place. The old buildings erected by the Mahomedan kings long ago are picturesque and beautiful. We wish you could see them and the ruins of

the Residency where the English sheltered in the mutiny of 1857. It is so quiet there now and it seems peaceful with its green lawns and bright flowers. But I always feel a little sad to look at those ruins and the monuments erected to the brave men that defended so well and died at their posts.

We three girls are very eager to visit America. I have many correspondents there — girls I've never seen — but the greatest reason is that we have sisters there. Helen's sisters, Ethel and Dora, have been there nearly six years, and Constance has just gone to join my sister, Sarasvati, at the Woman's College, Baltimore. Some day when our ships come home we three will go — Gertrude to Vassar, I to either Radcliffe, or Smith, or Bryn Mawr, and Helen to some Training College! Aren't daydreams interesting, even if they never come true? This morning I took a trip into Wonderland and Looking-glass Land with Alice — and it was lovely!

But, Mrs. Wiggin! we wish we had Polly here to go to college with, — she'd be such a lovely companion, and so would Rebecca Rowena Randall. Do you know any girls like Polly? Any girls that would like to have a correspondent out here? It would be lovely to know some one like Polly and write to her.

Perhaps this note seems too informal, coming from strangers; but to us you are not a stranger. We have learned to know you in our companionship with Polly and Carol and Patsy and others, and as I write I feel that I write to one who is just the friend for girls. I have written this letter, for the others are busy and I have much spare time, but the letter is equally from all.

I know that you are busy, but if you can ever

spare time to write us even a few lines, we will just love to hear from you. We don't know where you live, but hope this will reach you safe.

Good-bye. All good wishes from

Yours sincerely

HELEN MAYADAS
WILHELMINA V. SINGH
GERTRUDE MAYADAS

P.S. On reading this over it struck me that these lines are very far from being 'few.' I hope you'll not weary of this long letter. The doctor has just come and told me that I cannot get up for a long while, so I am reading about 'Patience.'

Good-bye.

Yours sincerely

WILHELMINA V. SINGH

LACONIA, N.H.
July 13, 1905

DEAR MRS. RIGGS:

I want to thank you very much for writing 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm,' as it is a treasure-house to me. I have gone to it for description and returned satisfied. The little brook, the 'woodsy bit,' and the 'one' composition are among my favorite parts of the book, while the Simpson Family is an unfailing source of amusement to me. Rebecca is just the kind of girl I like, and her doings were read in class by our teacher in the Winthrop School of Boston. I count this story among my greatest delights and I soon hope to own it. I am thirteen years old and I love to read books. I have learned to appreciate description in school, so I watch for it

in everything I read. I have read nearly all of your books, and Rebecca is my favorite.

I love capricious Nature — the woods, shadowy nooks, fleecy clouds, blue skies, babbling brooks, wild flowers, ferns, and everything. I love to hear the little songsters warbling out their melodious songs of joy, for here in Laconia, where I am visiting, I can see Nature at her best. In literature I have come across beautiful poems and books, and I cannot express the feeling of delight and happiness which they bring to me.

I was much interested in the article in 'The Ladies' Home Journal' about you and the way you wrote your stories. To me, it is wonderful to be able to write such books, and I know that girls everywhere feel grateful to you for them, for, in some way, we seem to feel acquainted with you, yourself.

So I could not resist writing to you about the book which has given me so much delight, for I wanted to tell you how grateful I was to you, and how much I appreciated what you have done for us all.

Very sincerely yours
MARIE ROTHENHAUSLER

CHAPTER XIX

THE 'PEABODY PEW' MYTH

AS I understand mythology, it is a science which examines myths or legends of cosmogony and of gods and heroes, and if you push me to the wall and demand the meaning of cosmogony, I should answer, on encyclopædic authority, that it is supposed to be a theory, however incomplete, of the origin of heaven and earth, such as is produced by primitive races in the myth-making age.

One would say, hastily, that this modest book of mine — a quasi-biography, you might call it — could have nothing whatever to do with the origin of heaven and earth, but mythology, you will remember, deals also with the origin of gods and heroes, and with that branch of the study I have intimate acquaintance, having seen in my time a myth planted, and observed it sprout, grow tall, and develop into a wide-branching forest tree.

I should have said, had I not ample evidence to the contrary, that, as modern Americans, we had progressed far beyond the myth-making age, but it is only the fool who speaks in haste and denies divinity, and I would, if I might, be considered something of a wise-acre.

What is the myth, then, with whose birth and growth I am familiar; what theory, 'however incomplete,' have I seen produced on the 'origin of gods and heroes,' by a 'primitive race'? I answer, conscious of the seeming absurdity of the response, that the simple romance of 'The Old Peabody Pew,' that tale of 'dear New England, with its hearts of gold, its dry humor, its quaint speech, its fragrance of old memories,' [1] that this, in the course of eighteen [2] years, has become as well-grown and flourishing a myth as was ever originated in the days of old.

You remember that Alice once said to the Red Queen, 'One *can't* believe impossible things!' and that fascinating sovereign replied, 'I dare say you haven't had much practice. When I was your age I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.'

One need not have had as much practice as the Red Queen to believe in this especial impossible thing, for it 'jumps to the eyes' every summer in the townships of Hollis and Buxton, and one elderly spinster, living (unfortunately for her) at a junction of four cross-roads between Saco and Buxton Lower Corner, told me not long ago that she was 'about beat out goin' to the door an' tellin' folks how to git to the

[1] Constance D'Arcy Mackay. [2] Published in 1907.

old meetin'-house where the "Peabody Pew" was'!

The original 'Justin' of the 'Old Peabody Pew' has his summer home in a stately Colonial mansion across Buxton Common, and he and his wife are so often called upon to show the Tory Hill Meeting-House, to give it its original name, that they now keep an especial key on hand for the purpose. It is useless to tell visitors that there is not and never was a 'Peabody Pew' in the old building. They merely look at you with a pitying smile and say they 'only ask because they want to sit down in it, just a minute.' Whenever, now-a-days we see in our week-day drives a group of cars in front of the meeting-house steps, we know that some long-suffering Dorcas is engaged in showing a party the Thing that never was, a Thing that members of a 'primitive race' insist upon as a reality. Last summer a benevolent myth-maker called at Quillcote and offered to provide the meeting-house with a silver name-plate for the Peabody Pew, that other myth-makers of the future might know its exact whereabouts. I explained the matter to her kindly and carefully, but I noted that as she stepped into her car she shook her head, sadly, and deplored to her companions my crass ignorance on the subject.

The facts are, of course, that there never was any Peabody Pew, any more than there ever

'was any Marjorie Daw,' and that quests for its exact location must, therefore, be unavailing. My sister's story, told with all the detail of Mrs. Gaskell, grew out of what we might call 'a scrubbing matinée,' planned and carried out by the members of the Dorcas Society of Hollis and Buxton, Inc. (I believe we weren't '*Inc.*' then, but no matter!) The church pews were sadly in need of painting; we couldn't afford that luxury, but we could scrub them and we did, arriving early in the morning armed with brushes, cloths, mops, soap, brooms, dustpans and dusters, remaining to luncheon on the sunny steps and cleaning assiduously in the afternoon, also.

The Salmon Falls Bridge that knits together the townships of Hollis and Buxton was out of repair on that particular day, and, as my sister always explained to the audience when the book was made into a play, a long détour was necessary to reach Quillcote, and it was decided that I should drive our tired little mother home first, and return for Kate. I had noted during the morning that one of our Dorcas members was scrubbing the pew of an absent neighbor as well as her own, remarking the while that there didn't 'seem to be anybody else to do it for him,' and I had mentioned the incident to Kate, with a smile. That was enough for the 'born story-teller,' and while she was left alone in the dear

old building, vibrant with its years of memories, she dreamed the romance of Nancy and Justin.

An eminent New England writer says:

> In 'The Old Peabody Pew' we come face to face and heart to heart with that really untranslatable something that is the New England of clean living, proud enduring, and brave dying. The winds from the pines and the hemlocks are in the pages that interpret the soul of the little church through its parishioners. The scent of apple-blossoms and prim gardens, with a blaze from the sunflowers over a fence, is wafted along sentences that seem the whispered echo of voices that issued years ago from the lips of actual men, women, and children.

It was a simple tale, made new and sweet with keen analysis in dramatic form of the foibles of the women who 'red up' the old church, yet without a drop of acid in the lenient ink. As it grew from the doings of the Dorcas Society, it was inscribed to its members by the author in the following dedication:

> To a certain handful of dear New England women of names unknown to the world, dwelling in a certain quiet village, alike unknown:
>
> We have worked together to make our little corner of the great universe a pleasanter place in which to live, and so we know, not only one another's names, but something of one another's joys and sorrows, cares and burdens, economies, hopes, and anxieties.
>
> We all remember the dusty uphill road that leads

to the green church common. We remember the white spire pointing upward against a background of blue sky and feathery elms. We remember the sound of the bell that falls on the Sabbath morning stillness, calling us across the daisy-sprinkled meadows of June, the golden hayfields of July, or the dazzling whiteness and deep snowdrifts of December days. The little cabinet-organ that plays the Doxology, the hymn-books from which we sing 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow,' the sweet freshness of the old meeting-house, within and without — how we have toiled to secure and preserve these humble mercies for ourselves and our children!

There really is a Dorcas Society, as you and I well know, and one not unlike that in these pages; and you and I have lived through many discouraging, laughable, and beautiful experiences while we emulated the Bible Dorcas, that woman 'full of good works and alms deeds.'

There never was a Peabody Pew in the Tory Hill Meeting-House, and Nancy's love story and Justin's never happened within its century-old walls; but I have imagined only one of the many romances that have had their birth under the shadow of that steeple, did we but realize it.

As you have sat there on open-windowed Sundays, looking across purple clover-fields to blue distant mountains, watching the palm-leaf fans swaying to and fro in the warm stillness before sermon time, did not the place seem full of memories, for has not the life of two villages ebbed and flowed beneath that ancient roof? You heard the hum of droning bees and followed the airy wings of butterflies fluttering over the gravestones in the old

churchyard, and underneath almost every moss-grown tablet some humble romance lies buried and all but forgotten.

If it had not been for you, I should never have written this story, so I give it back to you tied with a sprig from Ophelia's nosegay; a sprig of 'rosemary, that's for remembrance.'

K. D. W.

August, 1907

The name of the family owning the imaginary pew was the subject of considerable thought on Kate's part, for she did not wish to select any patronymic still borne in the neighborhood, and, considering that the name of *Peabody* went well with the word *pew*, she chose that, after consulting the Parish records and discovering that no Peabodys were there enrolled, as owning either pews or any other description of church property.

The simple romance won instant popularity, and the critics were kind enough to say that life in a New England village, as depicted in its pages, stood out with the fidelity of a Dutch painting. So far, so good, and the little book and its author were quite content and dreamed not of dramatic triumphs. I believe that the first suggestion of making a 'church play' of the story came from the Argentine Republic, for I remember that one morning in 1915 my sister came to my desk, saying, 'Here is a lovely

letter from Buenos Aires and the writer says that my "Old Peabody Pew" has just been dramatized by a club and presented down there!'

'I don't see how anybody could have made a play out of *that* story!' I exclaimed with sisterly candor. 'Nor I either!' cheerfully agreed my sister, 'but read the letter and see.'

3127 JURAMENTO, BELGRAN
BUENOS AIRES, ARG. REP., S.A.
Aug. 17, 1915

MY DEAR 'KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN,' for that is the name by which so many hundreds of your stranger friends know you best. You will be surprised to receive a letter from far Argentina, though people probably write to you from all over the world. It will be only one of the many from those who know you through the books you have written which have touched the heart so deeply, whenever they are read. I have been a teacher myself for many years, and thirty years ago was called here with other American ladies to organize and direct Normal Schools and Training Schools for teachers.

Now I have retired, because those whom we have trained are able to replace us and I have come down from the provinces to live in Buenos Aires, this beautiful city of which so little has been known at home.

A number of North American ladies living here so far from the United States, with all its intellectual enjoyments and advantages, have organized a Club called the 'Columbia Club,' the purpose of which is

to rub off the rust gathered with the years away from English books and friends. We are only twenty-five in number and we meet twice a month at each others' houses, each taking turns in entertaining and giving the 'tea,' and in reading papers upon the subject assigned them. It fell to me this past year to arrange the programme which consisted of a study of American Women who have become eminent in any line of work. The authoress '*Kate Douglas Wiggin*' fell to my lot, and I have a large supply of what has been printed about you; but I have re-read many of your books and your articles in the 'Ladies Home Journal,' and have become so imbued with the spirit breathing through them and so many memories have been evoked of my youth and girlhood in just such surroundings as you describe, that I seem to have returned to my old home on the sunny Massachusetts farm and all the years of exile seem forgotten.

I have just cut from a newspaper a picture of your home 'Quillcote,' and wish so much that our Club, or I, could have a good picture of it and you, although I know you must have hundreds of demands upon your time and thought, and perhaps it would be too much to ask. A friend of mine in Boston, my former home, has dramatized in a simple way, 'The Peabody Pew' for her Club, and she kindly loaned it to me, so I am having that, (the parts taken by the younger members of the Club) as an illustration after the paper. It made a shorter and simpler illustration than those of your stories that have been regularly dramatized, and this needed little scenery.

I hope you will excuse this letter and that by some wireless communication between minds you

may receive some of the affectionate interest we here — so far from you — feel and desire to send you of gratitude for all the ennobling influence your books must have had and will always have upon older as well as young readers.

With sincerest admiration and affection

A friend in far Argentina

(Miss) JENNIE E. HOWARD

Enthusiasm mounted as we read and increased still further when in a few weeks another charming letter arrived describing the success of the play and sending a photograph of the actors. The duties and pleasures of a New York winter, however, must have crowded the idea of play-making out of K. D. W.'s mind, for I find no further reference to the matter in her Line-a-Day Books until the summer of 1916, as follows:

July 7, 1916: Began to see if 'Old P. P.' could be dramatized.

July 12, 1916. Finished![1]

Aug. 16, 1916. First performance. Cloudless, Heavenly — Church crammed and many unable to get seats. Great enthusiasm.

In the Line-a-Day Book for 1919, I find:

Aug. 9, 1919. Saturday matinée — Greatest triumph of the nine previous performances. Common blocked with motors; hundreds turned away.

Speaking of her adventures as a playwright

[1] *The Old Peabody Pew: a Church play.* (Sam'l French & Co.)

A 'PEABODY PEW' PERFORMANCE IN BUXTON, MAINE

A 'PEABODY PEW' PERFORMANCE IN BUENOS AIRES

my sister says in her 'Garden of Memory': 'It is always a perfectly delightful play when the "Standing Room Only" sign decorates the outside of the theatre, giving a style to the sidewalk that no other placard in the world possesses.'

The old Tory Hill Meeting-House on Buxton Common naturally has no sidewalk, but the Dorcas Society members who acted in 'The Old Peabody Pew' and those who sold tickets, numbered seats, decorated the stage, and served as ushers, felt a really sinful pride when to richly dressed motorists in Rolls-Royces, arriving at the church doors, they were obliged to say, 'We are so very, *very* sorry, madam, or sir, but all our seats are taken. The only way to manage is to engage them in advance!'

For the ninth performance of the play, K. D. W. introduced a child character, a certain Sally Bixby, a little girl who makes her appearance toward the end of the famous carpet-sewing scene, in which members of the Dorcas Circle participate.

Advancing up the aisle, Sally, in a piping, childish voice, is heard to ask, 'Is Mrs. Sargent here?' and Mrs. Sargent characteristically answers, 'Yes, I'm here. Where *should* I be?'

The audience now perceives that Sally is all bundled up, in keeping with the cold winter

season which has already been indicated in the play, and an appealing little figure she is.

The long and short of Sally's errand is that she has come to borrow a yeast-cake for her mother. Although Mrs. Sargent says she does not carry yeast-cakes in her pocket, she obligingly directs Sally to the hiding-place of her latch-key and the repository of her yeast-cakes 'beside the doughnut crock.' Sally displays an astonishing amount of knowledge regarding the place of keeping the said key and the depleted state of Mrs. Sargent's doughnut supply, which delightfully satirizes the familiarity of neighbors in a small town. Sally's familiarity with the contents of the doughnut crock is not of a kind which breeds contempt, however; it evokes instead the heartiest of laughter from the audience.

There was some fear in the minds of our good minister and of some of our older church members that exception might be taken by the public to any dramatic performance given in an edifice designed for public worship, but they trusted to my sister's judgment in the matter and after the first rehearsal they were convinced that the play would be a helpful influence wherever it was presented.

Ministers of every denomination have seen it since its first presentation and their combined opinion is well reflected in the following letter:

OCEAN PARK, MAINE
August 23, 1916

MRS. KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN
Hollis, Maine

MY DEAR KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN:

Your very kind and appreciative note was forwarded to me here, where we have spent the past sixteen summers and I am glad if my article on 'The Old Peabody Pew' brought satisfaction to you and the Dorcas Society. For me it was both a labor of love and of necessity, as I had to give expression to the help received, even though I had but an hour to say what was dimly in my mind. The day following your first presentation I had to give a little talk to three or four hundred people at an out-of-doors affair, and was hard put to it to know what to say. Not till I had begun to talk did I remember the sweet performance of the night before; so I told of it as apropos of an educational uplift, making it the text of a plea for a larger use of the drama in church work. So you helped me out, and as a good many who heard me made a point of attending the two following occasions in the Buxton Lower Corner meeting-house, and came back enthusiastic, I was able, in small part to repay you.

It has long been a hobby of mine, that we should use in a perfectly legitimate way, the dramatic element in the Bible. Indeed it seems to me that we ministers smother that which is so vivid and truly dramatic in the Scriptures. Every verse and chapter is intense with life and movement, but dry essays, so often impersonal and matter-of-fact reduce it to stuff which has not even the merit of 'sound doctrine,' and good old-fashioned dogmatism. You

have struck a lost chord in the mixed music of churchly teaching, and even if we should miss the local setting in transferring this to other churches, it suggests a larger field, and quite a number of educators spoke to me after my talk, of such possibilities, as illustrated by your charming dramatization. I can hardly believe that you could have anticipated the effect 'Siloam' would have, as sung by the Dorcas Society. There is so much that is mawkish and over-done in the modern drama, that one has to laugh it to scorn, as being wholly superficial, so that when a bit of real sentiment is injected into our lives, it is truly welcome. That sweet melody is as dignified and flowing as a Beethoven motif or theme, and the hymn, for any who have church associations, has a tenderness beyond words. The combination was too much for me, and I am not as emotional as I once was, I regret to say.

The whole thing was a true preachment to us all, and we were the better for it.

Another chord you struck, which we have been groping for, is fundamental.

The love of the lover has been laughed at. The 'love one another' of Jesus has been thought impractical. It has been another growing conviction of mine that love is *one* and the line of demarcation less dividing than has been supposed. In other words, if the modern church were less of a refrigerator, and represented human kindliness and affection at its best, we should make a great discovery. We have enough of ritual and all kinds of theories workable and inadequate, but the art of loving folks and discovering the romance and beauty in everyday matters and people, with the church to lead on, is still a lost one. Certainly you are helping us to find

it. I still believe that deep, sweet and wholesome sentiment may rule the world, in spite of the dicta of business and — society.

You do not need 'punch.' The intimate knowledge of the ways of men, women and children, — their sharp economies and their half understandings, revealed as in a mirror, is the discovery of truth. To be able to interpret these villages to themselves, is greater than to be the most sensational portrayer of folly. Indeed, what is there so sensational as the simple life exposed?

While I was not old enough or near enough to know much about my Uncle Joseph [1] and his work, I have taken a satisfaction in hearing the friends and neighbors speak affectionately of him; and your kindly interest in the church he served well and faithfully, has touched me. He was very close to my father, later President of Dartmouth College, and as they both taught in Dartmouth when very young, graduating at eighteen and nineteen, were known as 'Tutor Sam and Tutor Joe.' I have wanted for some years to express to you, in behalf of the Bartlett family, what seems to me a most kindly and unselfish devotion to the old church. You have associated yourself with the finest traditions of the community, and have put your hand to the often hard-handed plow in real church service; and your stories have the true ring with historic fidelity, that will make them always read with interest and make them a fine contribution to the best literature of the country.

Most cordially yours

W. A. Bartlett

Lewiston, Maine

[1] The Reverend Joseph Bartlett, one of the early ministers of the Tory Hill Church.

I believe that 'Cupid and the Choir,' another 'church play,' which my sister left partly finished, would have had the same appeal, for in neither are stage, scenery, nor elaborate lighting required, and in both, what Mr. Bartlett calls 'the art of loving folks and discovering the romance and beauty in everyday matters and people' is exhibited to the full.

The book and the play, which the Dorcas Society of Hollis and Buxton, Maine (Inc.!), prizes as its own especial property have lost nothing of their popularity in the years since their first production, and in 1924 'The Old Peabody Pew' drama was presented in seventy-four towns of our country, representing nineteen States. Whether they are giving it occasionally 'in far Cathay,' or trying their hands at it 'in Spain,' we have not been informed, but we are assured that wherever New England people are gathered, there it will be seen, sooner or later.

CHAPTER XX

'REBECCA OF SUNNYBROOK FARM': THE BOOKS

THIS sketch of my sister's literary career and its attendant happenings has brought before me, as in a magic mirror, all her characters and one by one they have glided across the stage and disappeared. Rebecca only remains, Rebecca in whom I see much of Kate's own eager, dreaming childhood, happy Rebecca, whom Thomas Bailey Aldrich called 'the nicest child in American literature.'

During the progress of a painful illness, she came driving into K. D. W.'s vision one winter in New York, sitting erect on the slippery leather seat of the old stage-coach, her yellow calico frock standing stiffly out around her, her precious pink parasol held carefully by her side. The wheels rattled, the horses' hoofs whirled up the summer dust, and Rebecca Rowena Randall alighted at the gate of the Brick House at Riverboro, holding her bunch of faded lilacs. She *would* come in, she would not be denied, and pencil and paper must be found at once. The nurse was horrified, the doctor shook his head, but finally gave in when assured that the patient had a germ in her

system that would raise her temperature to a dangerous height if not speedily removed. A handful of writing materials was all the remedy required and Rebecca's picture, stage-coach and all, was sketched before the vision faded.

When the patient had so far recovered that change of air was advised, my mother and I went with her to Pinehurst, North Carolina. To the eyes of the other travellers we were a party of three, but in reality Rebecca was with us, 'carrying her nightgown,' for it was 'a real journey,' and assuring herself of the safety of her old hair trunk at every change of cars. Back to New York she came with us again, and later in the season journeyed to a sanitarium in the northern part of the State for a time. There my sister went on with the book from a couch on the roof and posted the concluding chapters to Maine as they were completed, that I might have them typed and sent to the publishers.

It is an interesting fact in a literary way, I think, that the germ of this book must have lain in K. D. W.'s brain since the date of her first published story, 'Half-a-Dozen Housekeepers,'[1] written in California when she was a slip of a girl. I doubt if she remembered herself, after all the years and all the happenings that had come between, that she called the two old

[1] Henry Altemus Company, Philadelphia.

spinster sisters in 'Half-a-Dozen Housekeepers' Jane and Miranda Sawyer, that they lived in a brick house, that they had a widowed sister, Aurelia Randall, who was struggling with a large family of children on a farm, 'up-country,' and that on the last page of the book, when the old ladies are speaking of taking one of their nieces to bring up, Miranda says, decidedly, 'Well, Jane, you can write we'll take Rebecca, though I always thought she was a self-willed child, too full of her own fancies to be easily managed.'

The story of this early book has nothing at all to do with Rebecca, whose name is given on the last page only, and but little to do with the Aunts, who are K. D. W.'s initial attempts at painting New England types, but the idea of some day developing this only once-mentioned Rebecca into a character, and showing how 'a child brings hope into a household and forward-looking thoughts,' must have lain somewhere in my sister's mind for many years and suddenly begun to germinate in 1903.

'Aunt Miranda' had prophesied of Rebecca, a quarter of a century or so before her birth as a real book character, that she would be a self-willed child, too full of her own fancies to be easily managed, while her creator used for her Wordsworth's lovely lines:

'Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.'

Probably my sister and Aunt Miranda were both right, for May-time must be far too full of her own delicious fancies to adopt those of anybody else, and Rebecca's eyes 'always had the effect of looking directly through the obvious (in this case, Aunt Miranda!) to something beyond in the landscape.'

The little rustic maiden, like her own sunny brook, 'always full of sparkles the livelong day,' did not have a moment to wait for her welcome when she finally appeared in print, for she had no sooner been helped from the stage by dear old Jeremiah Cobb than notes and letters and telegrams began to pour in upon her author, and not a critic in this country, or across the water, had a word to say in her dispraise, but only called her 'a lovely dear,' 'a precious creature,' or a prototype of 'youth immortal.'

An unknown critic in the 'Louisville Evening Post' of June 14, 1907 (to whom be a long and happy life in gratitude for the joy he gave my sister!) sang the following pæan to Rebecca, and because it is so beautifully worded I must needs preserve it here:

It is the fashion of the day [he says and I say *he* advisedly] to write letters to the heroines of novels — a pretty pastime, and one which is never lacking in opportunities for the critic. Since this is so, it is not out of place to review 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm,' with a letter to Rebecca herself; and, with the example of Abijah the Brave, who writes his love-letter in Latin, the epistolary critics may proceed as follows:

'My dear Rebecca, of Sunnybrook Farm and the Brick House:

'Oh, "*carissima puella*," as Abijah Flagg would say to Emma Jane, 'I love you as you are and for yourself':

'For you are gay and you are good; you are obedient and original; you are vivid and you are tender; in a phrase, you are fire and air and earth and dew — and all in a little New England bundle done up in homely little dresses and tied flat with homely little bows. The dresses make no difference, nor the bows, nor the flatness. I know you well; not as Adam Ladd knows you — a harp, a bubble, the shadow of a dancing leaf — but as something quite as delicate and far more enduring. It is you, dear child, who will wear when Emma Jane is faded and the unimaginative have gone to their graves. *For the Kingdom of Heaven is within you, and it will keep you alive and beautiful.* To borrow again from the Latin of Abijah: "*Ave atque vale; Vale, carissima, carissima, carissima puella!*" *De tuo fideli servo.*

'*A Critic.*'

Kate quoted her own Rebecca when this letter reached her and said it was 'so beautiful be-

yond compare that you had to swallow lumps in your throat while you read it, and little cold feelings crept up and down your back all the time.' Louisville, a city I have never seen, must be a heavenly place to live in, if all its critics can write like Rebecca's *fideli servo*, and as for Kentucky, known by me heretofore merely for its blue grass, its swift steeds, and its Mammoth Caves, I feel now that it is obviously the very home and haunt of old-time chivalry.

As for my sister's hosts of lovers, in the family and out of it, here and over the water, we all thought when we read the eulogy, of that nameless archer in the Scriptures who drew his bow at a venture and did such wondrous execution, for, as poets will, sometimes, he saw more than he knew he saw and characterized the creator as well as her creation.

May I venture to transcribe here also Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett's beautiful tribute to Rebecca, especially noteworthy as coming from one whose child-portraits are known the world over?

105 MADISON AVENUE, *Jan.* 18, 1904

DEAR MRS. RIGGS:

I wanted to write to you, and should have done so long ago, but work has made it literally impossible. You see I have read too much fiction not to have become *difficile* and when any one gives me a joy I touch my forehead to the earth before them in

salaams of gratitude. You gave me a joy with Rebecca. It is a lovely dear, that book! I wonder how many people recognize that it is a study of the most beautiful thing in the world — the thing which sets life astir and lights all the stars as it passes — the creature who is born with the genius of *temperament.* That is a different thing from the temperament of genius, which is occasionally by way of being rather trying. Rebecca, however, I do suspect of being also a genius, though she is as unconscious as the wind of spring. But about fifteen years after your story ended the world would, I believe, hear of her. It is so sweet, so fine, that you do not once *say* she is a creature of gifts, of charms, of fascinating qualities. You make only an exquisitely touched, perfectly unaffected picture of an artless, delightful, *delighted* young human thing, living, breathing and moving with absolute joyfulness in the sunshine which — she is not the least aware — radiates from her own being. I call her delighted because she *is* so delighted with everything, with every little joy she picks up by the wayside and touches and glows upon until it unfolds into full flower. The normal spirit and good cheer of her are adorable. Her unconscious leadership is the most lovable and natural thing. It is all so true and inevitable, and you have done it so well — so well. The very point at which you leave it all is of a perfection of harmony and restraint. My love to you; my congratulations.

Yours very truly indeed

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

Although my sister's life was by no means an unclouded one, and although she was hampered from her earliest years by a general fragility of

health and by frequent illnesses, yet she was, in this, most fortunate, that no manuscript of hers from the day she first began to write ever 'came home to roost,' and not only that, but never even to perch for a moment, preen its feathers, and stretch its wings for a longer flight.

All her books, of course, were not equally successful; she sometimes received unfavorable criticisms, which she invariably read with attention and carefully preserved that, as she expressed it, 'she might learn something from them.' A bulky scrapbook for each one of her stories is to be found in her study at Quillcote, each containing the opinions of the press and the public on its merits and defects, but the Rebecca volumes, for the two books and for the play, need a whole shelf for their accommodation.

One parchment portfolio, made and decorated for her by an artist-friend, holds nothing but letters from eminent men and women about Rebecca, that 'beautiful book,' as Mark Twain called it — 'beautiful and moving and satisfying. How Mrs. Riggs pervades it — her brightest and best and loveliest self!'

One would like to quote verbatim all the personal letters in this exquisite illuminated volume, but a few must really be given, if only to show the appreciative spirit, the loving-kindness of authors to one another.

For instance, Miss May Sinclair writes:

Grown-up geniuses are hard to 'do,' but the child genius is only 'done' by the grace of God, and that has certainly been with you, dear Mrs. Wiggin, in the writing of these stories.

Hamilton W. Mabie writes:

I fell in love with Rebecca in the stage-coach and never expect to fall out again. The story is charming throughout; admirable at every point.

And Mary Mapes Dodge, who knew children, if ever woman did, follows with:

Rebecca is delightful in every sense, a masterpiece of simple but vivid characterization.

Sarah Orne Jewett, exquisite painter of 'The Country of the Pointed Firs,' calls Rebecca 'a live, dear, genuine creature in this pretentious world,' and so the warm-hearted, generous praise goes on, quite enough to turn any but the most firmly set of heads.

The letters from unknown admirers are legion, one of them, which especially amused my sister, running:

In a recent number of 'Harper's Magazine' Mr. W. D. Howells conveys the impression that authors are not worshipped as they once were, nor looked upon as made of different clay from the rest of us. If this is true (and who should know better than Mr. Howells?), perhaps you are not so burdened with letters of appreciation that this one will be the last

straw. I remember how poor Louisa Alcott suffered with admirers, beginning with the young woman who fell fainting into the author's arms, with the hysterical request, 'Darling, love me!' and ending with the harmless old lady who begged permission to add an Alcott grasshopper to her collection of those sprightly insects gathered from other famous Concord lawns.

No such fantastic tributes were offered to K. D. W., but physicians, hospital attendants, and trained nurses were eloquent in Rebecca's praise and — rather dubious but heartfelt tribute — the Superintendent of a State Lunatic Asylum wrote, on duly labelled paper, from the Office of the Superintendent: 'I have given "Rebecca" to a number of my patients to read and they have derived great pleasure and benefit from it.'

Certain things occurred while the book was being prepared for publication that may have happened to other authors — as to that, I do not know; but that happened to this one only among my sister's books. For instance, the printers and proof-readers sent her messages of congratulation while they were working on the manuscript, the whole 'Family' of The Riverside Press wired Christmas greetings on the first holiday after the book appeared, and one of the members of the firm, in his happy and appreciative letter on K. D. W.'s success, sounded

the first note, in what afterwards proved to be a chorus, when he wrote, 'Did it ever strike you that Rebecca, of all your books, appealed more to men than women?'

The idea had not occurred to Rebecca's author up to that time, but Laurence Hutton followed immediately with his tribute, saying, 'Since Timothy quested himself into my heart I have met nobody in a book who has appealed to me more than Rebecca. I have laughed over her and I have cried over her'; and Jack London, from his headquarters with the Japanese Army in Manchuria, cries out that she is real, that he loves her, and would travel the whole world to make her his.

Here is a well-known artist in the illuminated volume, who rhapsodizes, 'No man, from Maine to Mexico, be he raw in youth or decrepit in age, but wants Rebecca — wants her *now*, before that gold-plated and presumptuous Aladdin can get to the Brick House!'

Another romantic painter, well-known in the great world, pours out his soul, dear fellow, as follows:

MY DEAR MRS. WIGGIN:

I have just come down from the West where it is wild — where I knew mountains better than men — flowers better than children, and was nearer to the stars than to women.

Then suddenly 'Rebecca Rowena' smiled at her

reflection in my heart — and took her place there — as child and girl — ready to make room for the woman.

Is there such a woman — save in your own beautiful dream of the eternal Feminine made manifest? But 'Rebecca' must be real — not a mere composite reality — else how could she make me love her so — so long to see her with these physical eyes?

Of course she may be a memory from some happier life — which your lovely picture of her has recalled. But then you must have been there and have known and loved her, too. Will you pardon an unremembered friend for asking if you would tell me the day and month of Rebecca's birth on this plane, — unless she was merely born of dreams and memories?

I am deeply grateful to you for your love-compelling picture of that child I have dreamed of — that girl I have sought — as the budding promise of the woman who has always lived in my soul since we were parted, — æons of ages ago.

I am Sincerely yours

A Western author-friend telegraphed that if Rebecca hadn't married yet he was coming East 'to take a chance'; a famous actor wired, 'Would I could be Aladdin to so charming, so darling a Rebecca!' and what we know as a 'solid, business-man' became sufficiently liquid to moan, 'Why was Rebecca given to another? As a mother parts with her only daughter at her wedding, so I feel at parting from that child.'

All these tributes from grown men, men of the world, men of experience, are amusing and touching in the same breath; one cannot but smile at their fervor and at the same time be a bit 'teary round the lashes' to think how they long for 'youth immortal, for Spring, for Girlhood, for new-found Poetry.'

CHAPTER XXI

'REBECCA OF SUNNYBROOK FARM': THE PLAY

This is perhaps the most radiant of the flight of birds. They have sung for years — freshly always. Others will be set free and they will sing also and always of the buoyant soul.

To this one, which so many already know and love, farther flight and wider — and God speed!

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

REBECCA, 'blithe youth incarnate, a changing, iridescent joy-bubble,' was made as welcome in foreign lands as she was in her own, and it was not long before she appeared in the Roumanian, Polish, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, and German tongues. She also appeared, and very much to her own surprise, I am sure, in English, with a glossary for use in German schools, and, crowning honor, a 'Rebecca Dictionary,' for the same purpose, was lately published in Berlin. The poor child's own dictionary, as set down in 'The New Chronicles of Rebecca,' was 'so small that it didn't have many genteel words in it,' and she could not find out in its pages how to spell 'Remerniscences,' though Aunt Jane had told her that there was an 's' and a 'c' close together in the middle of it, which she thought 'foolish and not needful.'

Apropos of glossaries, the late Bishop of Edinburgh, Dr. Dowden, in a delightful letter to Kate on the charms of her dream-child, says:

A good many words and phrases of the New England country folk in your book have puzzled me. Some I can guess at, but some are mysteries; 'To make more steps,' 'Job's turkey' (a fowl unknown on this side of the Atlantic), 'to be in a brash,' 'a suit of hair,' 'a cleat,' 'bonny clabber,' 'a dooryard,' 'pump,' 'pesky stuff,' and some others. The next edition should have a little glossary.

The exclamation 'Land!' is quite unknown here. 'Thanks be!' is, I suppose, an abbreviation suggested by Puritan reverence. (!)

'The New Chronicles of Rebecca,' a second book of the life and adventures of her girl-heroine, was not intended by the author to be a sequel to her 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm,' but, as I have already quoted in her own words, 'a further filling-in of incidents from the child's chequered existence.'

Letters and requests poured in upon her for years imploring a 'sequel,' and so numerous were they that she at last wrote out and had typed the following form of answer, which she posted to all inquirers, with thanks for their interest:

No [runs the letter] I shall decidedly not write a sequel to 'Rebecca,' because I feel that it might disappoint my readers. You see, there always is a se-

quel to every story, but it is thought out by each of its readers for himself; consequently a book has as many sequels as it has had readers, and their number alone limits the variety of possible versions. Mine would be different from yours, yours from somebody else's, and I should be in a hopeless minority of one so far as the further experiences of 'Rebecca' are concerned. She would suffer from it, and the public, too, which would be loth to accept my version with its own numerous ones in mind. Mr. W. D. Howells recently expressed this admirably, in the 'Easy Chair.' 'The true story never ends,' he says. 'The close of the book is simply the point at which the author has stopped, and if he has stopped wisely, the reader takes up the tale and goes on with it in his own mind.' I hope that I stopped wisely in the 'Story of Rebecca'; my correspondence demonstrates at least that its readers are anxious to go on with it, but Rebecca is theirs now, no longer mine, and their accounts of her further life would interest me much more than my own could possibly do.

One youthful admirer, however, was not content with the author's decision, and, feeling that a sequel there must be, produced one herself to suit her own taste. The following letter gives this work of art in the exact words in which it was sent to my sister:

MRS. KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

DEAR MADAM:

There is in Pennsylvania a little ten-year-old girl who illustrates the hold which 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm' has upon young people.

'When will there be more Rebecca?' she asked.

'I don't think there will be any more,' replied her mother.

'Then I must write it myself,' she sighed.

The mother forgot the question, but the sequel was written. Here it is, in a child's vertical script, its errors uncorrected. It wastes no words on local color, on psychological hair-splitting. It goes straight to the point and settles things to the satisfaction of everybody.

It was a rainy afternoon. All the family had moved to 'Rebecca's house,' — as they called it —. Rebecca was sitting at the window in her little room. She heard the rattle of the stage-coach. It stopped before the house, and Mr. Cobb helped a lady out and carried her satchel up to the house. Rebecca flew down stairs to see who it was. It was Miss Maxwell. 'O, Miss Maxwell,' she cried, 'take your things right off!'

Everybody in the house was glad to see the teacher Rebecca talked about so much. Miss Maxwell only stayed over night and in the morning she went home. The next week Rebecca was surprised again by having Mr. Ladd come to see her. He said he came to bring her a Xmas present. The day after he came he asked her to take a ride with him. When she came back there was a ring on her finger. On Xmas day as she stood by the fire she wondered why Mr. Ladd didn't give her her Xmas present. All at once somebody put a little box in her hand. She opened it to find a locket with a cake of soap engraved on one side, and on the other was Adam Ladd's picture. The next day they were married. After the short ride from the church she went up to her own room.

Her husband found her there a half an hour later. She was standing by the window. Mr. Ladd went in softly.

'What are you thinking of, my pretty maid?' he said, gaily.

'I was thinking that I'd have to change a sentence I once said. Instead of "God bless Aunt Miranda, God bless the brick house," It is "God bless Aunt Miranda, God bless the brick house and God bless my dear husband."'

M. M. D.
10 years old.

The youthful Rebecca, always a dramatic young person, with a gift for story-telling, slipped very easily over the footlights and became a stage-heroine in November, 1909, remaining on tour during that winter, and opening in New York in October, 1910, where the play ran to crowded houses for an entire season. It afterward travelled the United States from East to West, appeared in London and is still (1925) often produced by stock companies in our own country.

At the time of the opening performance in New York, the playwright, according to the newspapers, approached the public in a spirit of hopeful stoicism, remarking that one never feels as much fear the first time one takes chloroform as after one has had an experience or two.

Numbers of bugbears have been raised in my path by solicitous friends [she admitted to an interviewer], but few of them have materialized. They said I should find the associations of the theatre disagreeable and trying; on the contrary I have met

with nothing but courtesy and friendliness and warm appreciation.

They said it would be like breaking a butterfly on a wheel to put Rebecca in the hands of busy theatrical managers intent only on producing box-office receipts; but the sequel proved that the managerial hand was stretched out to protect the child on every occasion.

Now they remind me of the extraordinary difficulty, the caprice, the indifference of New York audiences; their 'hypercritical attitude,' their determination to laugh long, loud and constantly; their desire for strong meat in a play, their fear of being bored. This bugbear is a little more terrifying than some of the others, I'll confess, but my honest opinion is that if the New York public doesn't like my play, it will be the fault of the play, not the fault of the public. It may have to find its own audience, but if there is anything real, or human, or natural, or convincing about it, it will interest people.

There must be room on the stage for something but the eternal triangle; problems are not the chosen diet of the majority. They interest many persons, to be sure, and singularly enough, their appeal is frequently to the simple little married pair who have never been away from each other a day in their lives and whose only excursions into the forbidden, or at least the problematical, are made in the plays they go to see.

But I think the public generally cares to see the life reflected that it knows, though of course it seeks the light of poetry on that life. New York has not entirely outgrown sentiment and poetry and gayety of heart; not a bit of it!

The public is never so stupid and unappreciative

and wrong-headed as we think it is. Half the time, at least, when it doesn't like a thing, it is right and the thing is wrong!

You are an optimist! said the interviewer accusingly.

Yes, Mrs. Riggs confessed. I was born seeing rose-color, but I see truth just the same. You know if you will only furnish a certain amount of sunny weather you will generally dispel mist and gloom. I have been a child, a girl and a woman in little New England villages and I describe life just as I have found it — rose-colored.

But what have you done with the New England conscience? the interviewer asked — that gloomy heritage once handed down from father to son, from mother to daughter? It runs all through Hawthorne; it still survives in the stories of Mary E. Wilkins. Yet your characters are no more troubled with moral dyspepsia than modern pagans are.

But consciences are no longer hereditary, even in New England, pleaded the author, and conscience everywhere is changing its base. The instinct of worship is dying out, but the sense of humanity is springing up in its place. Every soul must travel its own way if it is to make any progress at all. The modern conscience, if you like, is self-made.

I have tried to paint in Rebecca a little gay, tremulous, sensitive, eager, rhyming, dreaming child, setting her on a background of New England village life. In the neighbors, her playmates, the spinster aunts, the stage driver, the voluble gossip, the village ne'er-do-well with a family history not open to inspection, — I find my simple human types. Do you believe the simplicity of it all will bore people?

No; I can answer my own question: — if they are bored, it will be because I haven't achieved the true simplicity which is the highest art; because I haven't the genius to be universal, and thus appeal to the general mind and heart. The public is not blind, it is merely that we who write for it have not seen the vision clearly enough ourselves to make them see it in their turn. The public is not deaf; it is simply that our particular message has not been framed so that it will reach their ears. 'Don't growl about the public,' would be my motto; nor give it what it wants, if it seems to want the wrong thing. Just put your wits to work (and your heart, too) and see if you can get the inspiration to give it the right thing.

Apparently K. D. W., with the aid of her collaborator, Miss Charlotte Thompson, was amply able to give her public 'the right thing,' for one of our oldest English adages lays down the truth that the proof of a pudding is in the eating, and all the world and his wife seemed to enjoy this one. That her husband, mother, sister, and brother acclaimed it is no subject for astonishment, nor that her Maine neighbors, in conclave assembled, at a matinée given in their honor, laughed and cried over it in real delight, but the critics, although opining that the evening's entertainment was not a play in any classical sense of the word, still wept real tears and laughed real laughs when they went to see it, one generally captious gentleman writing that

he 'laughed himself into wrinkles, and as for tears, he had not known so wet a season in years.'

A noted actress wrote: 'The test of a play is what you feel next morning on waking, and I want to tell you how happy, how content I was and how the serene spirit in the play and the exquisitely artistic work of it remains with me.'

When the simple rustic drama was given in San Francisco, K. D. W. sent a greeting to be read by Miss Ursula St. George, the then Rebecca, before the rising of the curtain on the first night, February 26, 1912, and I transcribe it here, because it gives so much of my sister's personality and because it links together our old kindergarten days with these newer ones that have grown from them:

To my San Francisco Friends of the Long Ago.

It is not possible for me to be with you to-night in person, yet my heart is there, and so much of me altogether, in thought and feeling, that it seems almost as if I were looking into your faces, forgetting the long years of time, and many miles of space, that have separated us.

When I think how fresh my memories are of those days of 1878 to 1885, I must believe that, scattered through the theatre, there will be many others who will remember them, too. There may be some of the generous men and women who watched over the fortunes of the old Silver Street kindergarten — the first institution of its kind west of the Rockies and the mother of all the others on the Pacific coast.

There will surely be a few of the beloved girls, (they once numbered nearly four hundred,) who studied under me in the California Kindergarten Training School. Not one of us who labored there, trying to make the world a happier and a better place to live in can ever forget the weary, beautiful, consecrated days spent in that little out-of-the-way corner on 'Tar Flat.'

May there not be in the audience, too, a grown man or woman who was once one of the three-year-olds in Silver Street? If I were in the theatre I know some of them would come up after the play and ask for 'Miss Kate,' as if the passing of twenty-five years were only a dream! How often I have wished it were possible for me to stand on the well-remembered corner of Silver and Third streets, and, by the waving of a magic wand, summon the hundreds and hundreds of children who have said their daily good-bye to me by the little tin shop that once was there!

Those children taught me nearly all I know of human nature. They set my life-work to a tune which has never ceased ringing in my ears. Whenever I lay down my pen and prepare to send a book out into the world I always wonder whether it will find its way into the home, and the heart, of one of those grown-up children somewhere in California, and if 'airs from the Eden of youth will awake and stir' in his soul as they do in mine while I am writing this letter.

If I have been able to do a few good things in my life they have oftenest been due to the inspiration of children and young people. Here they are again tonight, throwing a light upon my work that really comes from their own merry, winsome faces! Mine

has been all through the years a beautiful motherhood of book-children, and now, unexpectedly, another sort of motherhood has been vouchsafed me and you will to-night see my stage family, almost as dear to me as if they were my own kith and kin.

It is Rebecca who is reading this greeting; Rebecca who is my chosen messenger; but every member of the company has his or her share in it, for in a moment they will be showing you my characters in the flesh, just as if they were issuing from the covers of the books. You will like them for their own sakes, I am sure of that, and the heartier welcome you give them, the greater joy will be mine! If, at the end of the evening, there is a little praise left over for me, I shall be one of the happiest, one of the proudest, and one of the most grateful women in the world.

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

In later years Rebecca was translated to the film-stage and impersonated by the world-famous Mary Pickford, but this so-called triumph was rather a source of unhappiness to K. D. W., for the fact that the story was pictured in California deprived it in her mind of the proper New England atmosphere. More than this, she was not allowed any hand in the scenario, and some incidents of the story were cut out altogether, while others were introduced which Rebecca's author considered showed her characters in a false light.

The play, however, was always a source of happiness to her, whoever played it and wher-

ever it was seen, and she freely confessed that she had never experienced 'moments of such extreme felicity' as during the winter of its production in New York. In the words of her own hero, to her own heroine, in her own book, she was 'glad to have met the child, proud to have known the girl, and rejoiced in the woman.'

CHAPTER XXII

SYMPATHETIC MAGIC

BRANCH I, 'HOMŒOPATHIC MAGIC'

All magic is based on the law of sympathy — i.e., the assumption that things act on one another at a distance through a secret link, due either to the fact that there is some sympathy between them, or to the fact that they have been at one time in contact, or that one has formed part of the other.[1]

WHETHER or not one believes in magic — black, white, or any shade or tint in between — the fact that things (some things!) do indeed act on one another at a distance through a secret link needs no proof, but is a matter of everyday experience. It would be but an old tale to treat of the influence of books in a general way, but no doubt every successful author could furnish, if he would, many interesting concrete examples of the way in which his particular magic has worked. It seems to me, as I look back upon the long list of my sister's books (quite as familiar to me as my own in conception and working out), that many of them had a certain sympathetic magic about them, which was rather unusual and no doubt a reflection of her own personality. In saying

[1] There are two branches of Sympathetic Magic, 'Homœopathic Magic,' and 'Contagious Magic.' (J. T. Frazer, *The Golden Bough.*)

this I am claiming for her no exalted literary rank, something that she would have hastened to disclaim for herself, for, as she said in her 'Garden of Memory,' she was much in the company of mountains and a camel sees himself truly when he goes under a mountain.

Her recipe for making a book, which I give below, seems to show that only such ingredients entered into the compound as any one could procure in open market, but you note that she does not divulge what implement she used for mixing them! It might have been — who knows — one of 'the divining-rods of Magi old' — certainly it sometimes worked wonders.

Recipe for making a Book [1]

(*Written in a copy of 'Timothy's Quest,' for Miss Blank of Bramall Hall, Cheshire, England*)

Talent — 2 oz.
Common Sense, size of an Egg.
Knowledge of Human Nature, 1 oz.
Put all into the Mortar of Experience and pound well with the Pestle of Discretion.
Add 1 pint Sentiment, 1 gill Wit, and just a shake of Sadness.
Strain again six months later and destroy Sediment.
Season, Garnish. Serve immediately.
If the public likes the dish, it will be eaten at once. If it comes back untasted, remove it from menu.

As 'The Story of Patsy' called many earnest young women to take up the vocation of kindergartner, so 'Polly Oliver's Problem' created an

[1] From Mrs. Riggs, a fair Book-Cook to Miss Blank, a Perfect British Cook-Book.

interest in story-telling as a profession, and not only, or even chiefly, as a livelihood, but as a lovely medium of helpfulness. Many 'Polly Oliver Clubs,' as I have said in another chapter, were formed under the influence of the book, and although not all the girls who joined them were 'born story-tellers,' like Polly herself, who 'ought to have wandered about the country with a lute under her arm,' yet they tried their eager best to 'follow the gleam,' and many an orphan asylum, foundling home, and children's hospital was the better for their efforts.

Girls who longed to help in the work of the world often told my sister that they had taken up story-telling just because of a few passages in Polly's book, as, for instance:

> She was telling stories to the children. There were fifteen or twenty of them in the room, all the semi-invalids and convalescents, I should think, and they were gathered about her like flies around a saucer of honey. Every child that could, was doing its best to get a bit of her dress to touch, or a finger of her hand to hold, or an inch of her chair to lean upon. They were the usual pale, weary-looking children, most of them, with splints and weights and crutches, and through the folding-doors that opened into the next room I could see three more tiny things sitting up in their cots and drinking in every word with eagerness and transport.

The names of the books prepared for the 'professional story-teller' in that 'upper cham-

ber, whose name was Peace,' were a charm to every one who loves children's tales, and the charm was complete when Polly described how she felt when telling them:

'When the children gaze up at you,' she said, 'with their shining eyes and their parted lips — the smiles just longing to be smiled and the teardrops just waiting to glisten — I don't know what there is about it, but it makes you wish you could go on forever and never break the spell. You seem so close to children when you are telling them stories; just as if a little, little, silken thread spun itself out from one side of your heart through each of theirs, until it came back to be fastened in your own again, and it holds so tight, so tight, when you have done your best and the children are pleased and grateful.'

But to go on with the two themes of children and story-telling would be to make my readers believe that I had plunged into one of those 'gulfs of mid-Victorian sentimentality,' of which one must be so wary now-a-days. Personally, I am of the opinion that I would as lief be plunged into sentimentality as into sensuality, and that the former would be the easier washed off, but to maintain a *juste milieu* is, of course, the ideal.

Apropos of 'The Old Peabody Pew,' the stories concerning which are generally slightly tinged with that shocking dye of 'sentimentalism,' a story of quite a different kind may be submitted. In 1914 a cheaper edition of this

volume, first published as an elaborate Christmas book, was issued and sold by Grosset and Dunlap among their reprints. One day in April of that year Mr. Roger L. Scaife, of Houghton Mifflin Company, received the following letter:

DEAR MR. SCAIFE:

The enclosed from one of the most recent additions to our travelling force is very funny, and I thought you might like to read it and show it to Mr. Mifflin.

This traveller is going through very small towns in Virginia, North and South Carolina, and it is evident that we are combing the country very much finer than ever before, and endeavoring in our small way to make converts to the book-selling trade.

Yours very truly

A. GROSSET

Here is the enclosure which obviously needs neither comment nor explanation.

Salesmen's Special Report

Date — Apl. 14, 1914.

DEAR BLANK:

Kindly have sent to me one copy of Old Peabody's Pew. I gave my copy to Mrs. Chang Bunker, ninety-two years old, widow of one of the Siamese Twins. I spent the day with her and her son, Sunday, up in the 'Allen feud country,' and she liked the book on account of the large print. She is a very remarkable woman, and still is able to attend to the housework.

The old lady gave me her photograph and also a

fine engraving of her *closely connected* husband and brother made seventy-five years ago. Wouldn't you have liked to have been along?

Sincerely

DASH

In some brief reminiscences written of K. D. W. by her 'oldest friend,' Miss Jessie Chase, a passage from which has already been quoted, she tells of a stage-ride which these two young persons of twelve years took, as part of an unchaperoned journey from Portland, Maine, to Bedford, Massachusetts. They drove four miles, Miss Chase writes, from Lexington to Bedford in a stage-coach, 'and the driver was so captivated by Kate's delight and animation that he volunteered to take us some day over the same route and back. The eight miles of drive, when the joyous occasion came, lost much of its novelty before we were back, though we had the stage to ourselves and occupied every inch of it, especially the four window-spaces. I have often wondered whether that ride may not have lain in the back of Kate's mind and later come to the surface when Rebecca took her memorable journey.'

Since, in my early girlhood, I travelled three days and nights from Yuma to Tucson, Arizona, in a stage, I have not regarded those antique vehicles with much favor, but a theatrical stage is distinctly different from a real one,

rattling over sun-baked deserts and through forests of cacti, and the Concord coach secured for the 'Rebecca' play was always a source of delight to every one who saw it.

My sister and her friends were much interested that Rebecca should make her first appearance in a real stage from the Pine Tree State, and after scouring York County, one was finally discovered lying in an almost-forgotten old barn at Prout's Neck.

The owner and former driver — a semi-hermit, who lived most of the year in a shack on the beach, nearly hidden by ledges and bowlders — gave his would-be purchaser a royal welcome when she appeared and was pleased to show his cumbrous vehicle, which had long slumbered amid dust and cobwebs in the refuge of its declining years.

He had apparently been one of those old-time whip experts who could flick a fly from the leader's ear and who could whirl up magnificently to the tavern and just miss the stone of the steps, and he related how the old stage came to Maine from the West and had been through many adventures. 'I drove it for years with four mustangs and we had merry times and quick trips,' he cried with enthusiasm. 'More than once white people have been shot off the top by Indians,' he added cheerfully; and one of his hearers, at least, recalled nights

on the Arizona desert and the blood-curdling whoop of the Apaches at a distance.

After years of valiant service the 'outfit,' as they say in Arizona, had been exhibited at ten county fairs, but it was still in excellent condition, a genuine nine-passenger Concord coach with its thoroughbraces and double-decked seats, with the long brake at the side, the rack and straps behind, and a wonderful combination of folding steps for the driver and double-deck passengers.

It still showed, too, the rich, dark-red paint, yellow trimmings, and elaborate scroll-work of heraldic designs, and inside, though faded, were the fine old trappings and curtained windows.

K. D. W. was delighted with her find, and, discovering that its ancient owner was not so much of a hermit that he had not heard of 'Rebecca,' she administered some drops of homœopathic magic to him by describing how wonderful the scene would be when the old vehicle rumbled on to the stage with her girl-heroine peeping anxiously from its windows. To this the driver agreed, but seemed to think it no argument for reducing his price, and, when Kate wrote to her managers [1] for permission to buy her treasure-trove, she remarked that she expected to have them reply that the inexpensive rumble of a stage in the wings would do

[1] Messrs. Klaw and Erlanger.

very well for an author with her first play, and that Miss Rebecca could come in on her own feet.

Instead they telegraphed — noble creatures! 'Buy the stage, by all means, at any figure you consider reasonable.'

So the Concord coach was purchased, and it was driven in from Prout's Neck to Portland over eighteen miles of rough Maine roads. Three little country girls, hearing about the sale of the stage and its destination, stopped it on the way, clambered in, and rode into Portland. Proud as peacocks, they rumbled into town looking like Rebecca and her companions, and centering all eyes upon them in their triumphal progress. An autograph copy of 'Rebecca' to the old-time driver cemented the friendship and proved, as 'The Golden Bough' asserts, that some things 'act on one another at a distance through a secret link.'

In speaking of my sister's early work I have mentioned a novelette which she wrote as a girl of eighteen in California, and which, though never published under her own name in her lifetime, has now appeared under the auspices of the Dorcas Society of Hollis and Buxton, Maine, and is proving most efficient in adding to the funds of this organization.

When I decided to present the Dorcas

Society with the manuscript of this story, should they wish to publish it, I set these charming lines of Arthur Guiterman's upon the title-page, thinking they would excuse and explain the juvenility of the tale that followed:

> 'Yet if thy bard be young, have grace
> To bear with him a little space.
> The fledgling nightingale must grow
> Before he charms the rose; and though
> A stripling's work be somewhat rough,
> In time he may do well enough.'

To this I added the following Preface and the fact that the little book has found so many friends and that the cook-book, 'Dorcas Dishes,' which my sister compiled, has established itself as a modest 'best-seller' in its line, adds another proof to my belief that her work has a touch, at least, of 'sympathetic magic.'

Preface

'Love by Express,' the novelette of Southern California life, privately printed and sold to-day by the Dorcas Society of Hollis and Buxton, Maine, was one of the earliest stories written by my sister, Kate Douglas Wiggin.

As to the exact year of its composition I am uncertain, for I share her indifference to dates and her inability to regard them as important. I know, however, that it was written in Santa Barbara, California, immediately after the publication in the 'St. Nicholas Magazine' of her story for girls, 'Half-a-

Dozen Housekeepers,' and just before her attention was turned to the study of kindergarten. It thus represents the work of a novice in literature and must be judged from that standpoint and not from that of her later and more serious productions.

It has not heretofore been published under her own name, for although she rewrote it several times — once, by the way, on a dear old farm near Groveville, Maine — yet it never altogether suited her literary taste and remained year after year in her desk, taken out occasionally, dusted, repolished, and returned to its seclusion.

In 1911, my sister and I were in need of some extra money for one of our charitable enterprises, and I, who had always cherished a tender feeling for the youthful manuscript, begged that I might try to have it published, under a 'nom de plume,' if the author thought best, and that I might use the proceeds for our charity. Consent was finally given and the little book was launched at once, finding a safe harbor in the first magazine office to which it was sent. I recall that the editor, in his letter of acceptance, pronounced it 'the work of a writer of great promise' and we two, knowing the promise had long been fulfilled, smiled together over the happy phrase.

We signed the manuscript with the name of 'Genevieve Knight,' I remember, and the unknown Genevieve was for some time the recipient of marked attention from editors who wanted to see more of her work.

The story was published, the money spent, but the printed copy remained in the author's desk, as the manuscript had done, for by this time she felt it somewhat too juvenile and over-romantic to be

added to her already long list of maturely ripened books.

To the members of the Maine Dorcas Society, however, of which Kate Douglas Wiggin was long the beloved Honorary President, its very youth is charming, as well as the balmy air of Southern California that breathes throughout its pages and we believe that all its readers will share our pleasure in the book.

To California, then, because there it was composed and to Maine, because there it was rewritten, the Dorcas Society dedicates this little volume, its second venture in publication.

The proceeds, like those of its first venture, 'Dorcas Dishes,' will be devoted to the benevolent work of the Society and we believe that in so doing we are following the author's custom with all her writings and 'lending it,' in very truth, 'to the Lord.'

N. A. S.

Let me close this chapter, dealing with the first branch of 'Sympathetic Magic,' with a bit of Oriental bric-à-brac.

The 'Birds' in China

A group of native nurses in Peking recently put on their own dramatic version of Kate Douglas Wiggin's 'Birds' Christmas Carol.' The performance earned them a good sum for the benefit of the poorer patients in their hospital, and was described as 'deliciously funny' by one of the American onlookers. It was an all-Chinese performance. The well-known Ruggles family appeared in native costume, with paper patches attached to indicate

that they were poor, and with their faces wreathed with the most ingratiating of celestial smiles.

And here is the letter of explanation:

CARTHAGE, MISSOURI
April 27, 1921

MY DEAR MISS CHASE:

I wonder if you want to do a little missionary work? Out on the Pacific Coast I met a medical missionary, an American woman, Dr. Clementine Bash, who was selling, for a benevolent purpose, all the gifts presented to her by grateful patients at the Woman's Hospital in Peking, of which she has charge. She was in Seattle, on leave, but expected to return to China on May first. I was to have returned to her, long before now, the enclosed pictures but I wanted to get them into the hands of Kate Douglas Wiggin, if possible, with the request that she and some of her friends contribute such sums as they might feel disposed to give in these piping times of requests for money from so many other sources, toward the fund which Dr. Bash was raising to send to this country for medical training, a young Chinese woman doctor. After many delays I am forwarding the pictures to you, in the hope that you may be willing to send them on to Mrs. K. D. W. with an explanation, which I append.

You will note that two of the kodak pictures indicate that they have reference to the Birds' Christmas Carol, as performed by the native nurses at Duow Hospital in Peking. Dr. Bash tells me that she read the story aloud to them. They then proceeded to dramatize it themselves, got up their own costumes (note the paper patches of the 'poor'

family), staged it and collected funds from the rich patients, who were much delighted with the performance, and gave them to the needier patients for their hospital expenses. This is probably the first time the story was ever staged in China — certainly the first all-Chinese performance. It must have been deliciously funny and I'm sorry you couldn't all have heard Dr. Bash describe it.

CHAPTER XXIII

SYMPATHETIC MAGIC

BRANCH II, CONTAGIOUS MAGIC

THE second branch of Sympathetic Magic, the 'Contagious,' which to judge by its results, is probably the more effective of the two, is well illustrated by two charming letters received by my sister in 1912, after her story of ideal motherhood, 'Mother Carey's Chickens,' had run its course in 'The Ladies' Home Journal' and been published in book form. K. D. W. was, it may be, unusually fortunate in the swift response her books brought to her, but if this be so, it was because she had, indeed, like all successful magicians, a 'secret link' with human-kind.

Here is the first letter, a good, plain, sensible one, the letter of a man of feeling, who needs no recommendation from the 'Official List of Railroad Officials':

BLANK, PENNA., *Dec. 2nd*, 1912

MRS. KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

DEAR MADAM:

I am taking the liberty of enclosing to you the photograph of a family of Careys that resemble somewhat the family in that delightful story of yours, 'Mother Carey's Chickens.'

The father was a Railroad Conductor, who died two years ago from injuries received on the road and his life insurance and the indemnity paid by the company makes his legacy to his children. The mother has employment in town, but they live out in the country and are making a splendid fight, inspired somewhat by your story which they read while it ran as a serial in 'The Ladies' Home Journal.'

I am sure that an autograph copy of that delightful book would be greatly prized in this home. May I presume to suggest that you put their name on your Christmas list?

The mother in question is a cousin of mine and gave me the picture for myself and hasn't the least idea what I am doing with it. Keep the picture and be assured that there is one real Carey family to whom your story is a source of inspiration and help. This is not a scheme to get a free book, I assure you, and the Post Master at —— Pennsylvania can corroborate.

Yours very truly —— ——

P.S. If your Railroad Agent has the Official List of Railroad Officials, you will find my name there as General Foreman C.R.R. of N.J.

If you do not realize at once how swiftly my sister responded to this letter, I have altogether failed, in the many pages I have written, to show her character through her work, and through her own words, rather than by praise or eulogy of mine. She could not write soon enough to a real 'Mother Carey' and send a photograph, an autographed book, and photographs, too, for

all the 'chickens,' and she felt that the answering letter from the valiant mother more than repaid her for writing the story:

HOPETOWN, PA.
Dec. 22, 1912

DEAR KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN:

It would be difficult for this Mother Carey to tell you just how happy she was to receive your book and photographs. As the first installment of 'Mother Carey's Chickens' was published a very short time after our bereavement, the story touched a responsive chord in my heart, and the memory of that beautiful mother has lingered and been a real inspiration to me. Many of my friends have spoken of my children and myself as reminding them of your 'Mother Carey's Chickens,' but I know there is no real comparison. Your Mother Carey is such a wonderful character, just what a Mother should be, so sweet, patient and just, and when I compare myself to her, I realize how far I am from being what I should be. What a beautiful gift it is, that of story writing and portraying character in such a way that all who read are bound to be the better for it. I am so glad to have a copy of this lovely story for my own and when it comes as a gift from the Author, it is doubly valuable to me.

I am ever so curious to know how you heard of my little family living in this remote place and being distinguished for nothing in particular outside of our own circle of friends. I am sending you a photograph of my 'chickens,' taken very recently. Their names are Ruth, Harriet, Catherine, and my 'Peter-Bird' is Robert; their ages are twelve, eight, six, and four respectively.

I want you to know that I do appreciate the kindness and honor you have shown to this Mother Carey and her 'Chickens' — (the Chickens were so pleased that there was a photograph for each one of them), and to tell you that your mother-picture has given me both pleasure and inspiration.

With many thanks I am

Very sincerely yours

ELIZABETH N. CAREY

One of the loveliest results of the sympathetic magic of a book was in the founding of a Thank Offering Bed in the Children's Ward of the Germantown Hospital, Pennsylvania, through a passage in my sister's story of 'Marm Lisa,' and I will give it here, for this magic is of a kind that is never exhausted, but is like the true wine —

> 'Whose ample leaves and tendrils curled
> Among the silver hills of heaven
> Draw everlasting dew.'

It may be, if given here complete, that the words will again fall into good ground and bear fruit abundantly, and whoever helps a child helps the world.

'That was a beautiful thought of Pastor Von Bodelschwingh of the Colony of Mercy in Germany. He had a home for adults of ailing mind and body, and when he wanted a new house for the little ones, and there was no money to build or equip it, he asked every parent in Germany for a thank offering to the Lord of one penny for each well child.

Within a short fortnight four hundred thousand pennies flowed in — four hundred thousand thank offerings for children strong and well. The good pastor's wish was realized and his Baby Castle an accomplished fact. Not only did the four hundred thousand pennies come, but the appeal for them stimulated a new sense of gratitude among all the parents who responded, so that there came pretty, touching messages from all sides, as: "Four pennies for four living children; for a child in heaven, two." "Six pennies for a happy home," "One penny for the child we never had." "Five pennies for a good wife."

Ah! never, surely, was a Baby Castle framed of such lovely timber as this! It seems as if heaven's sweet air must play about the towers, and heaven's sunshine stream in at every window, of a house built from turret to foundation stone of such royal material. The Castle might look like other castles, but every enchanted brick and stone and block of wood, every grain of mortar, every bit of glass and marble, unlike all others of its kind, would be transformed by the thought it represented and thrilled with the message it bore.'[1]

K. D. W.

Among my sister's papers I found a little article which she wrote herself about this Thank Offering Bed and I will give it here in full, for it is only by these touches, showing the breadth of her sympathies and the reach of her helpfulness, that her picture can be truly painted.

Ten or twelve years ago [runs the article] I wrote

[1] From *Marm Lisa.* (Houghton Mifflin Company.)

a book which, in proper course, I forgot as completely as one forgets the arrows cast into the air, that fall to earth one knows not where. I certainly fancied it forgotten by everybody else, but in the harvesting of spiritual crops there are two things to be reckoned with — the quality of the seed sown and the quality of the soil into which the seed falls. Mine fell into a warm, generous, helpful woman's heart that chanced to be beating in Germantown, Pennsylvania, and there has been such a harvest!

The thrice-lucky book is 'Marm Lisa.' The modest little heroine is a waif and stray, a child of clouded mind but dogged loyalty and unswerving persistency in the duties she comprehends. She is nurse, mother, watch-dog, for two little turbulent sons of Adam, and the three, the vicarious little mother, and the unregenerate infants, are drawn into a certain Mistress Mary's kindergarten, one of those blessed places of peace, one of those green oases, blooming in city deserts of grime and poverty and wretchedness. The book is a record of little Marm Lisa's daily life; of the way in which the weight was lifted from her hopeless aching mind; a record, too, of the lives of many other children, some of them hearty, tough, riotous, noisy, naughty, some of them suffering for the sins and mistakes of their ancestors.

The diary of a certain Mistress Mary (the presiding genius of the child garden) fills two or three chapters of the story, and she recounts a plan for raising money to build a new wing to a children's hospital. It was no scheme to solicit thousands from a few millionaires, but the parents of hearty, happy, strong children were asked to give pennies as thank offerings for their blessings, the thank offerings to be

used in building a home for children of ailing mind or body, and thus the humblest and poorest parent could help the work.

It was a beautiful idea, of course, but it needed a sympathetic heart and a generous mind to bring it to fruition and these were furnished by the 'Lady from Germantown' [1] who knew that an endowment for another children's bed in the local Hospital was sorely needed. She promptly organized a Committee that sent out not only hundreds of circulars stating the Thank Offering plan and hundreds of little brown envelopes for the donations; but notices to churches, which appointed persons to receive the envelopes, and in a trice Germantown was alive with interest. A child's pain, a child's tear, these loosen all heart-strings and drag purses from the most reluctant pockets.

The exquisite, fragile, intangible, imaginative plan ran like a golden river through the town, or it flew like a carrier pigeon, or it flowered between sunset and sunrise like a night-blooming cereus — choose any figure of speech you like best and it will all be true. I was speedily summoned to a meeting held in the great hall of the Y.M.C.A. in Germantown. It was filled with an enthusiastic audience, ministers of various denominations were on the platform, and while the speeches were going on, the contents of the envelopes were being counted in a room inside. There were plenty of real pennies, and thousands of small coins, so that it was a task indeed. There were pennies with beautiful messages, some of them repeating those in Mistress Mary's diary: 'Two pennies for two well children; for a child in heaven two.' 'Five pennies for a

[1] Miss Sarah Bache Hodge.

happy home.' 'Ten pennies for a good wife.' 'Fifty pennies for the child we have always longed for and never had.' These were well calculated to bring lumps into the throat, but there was a delicious touch of comedy in one envelope. Out tumbled a note written in a childish hand; a note that read: 'I am a little girl seven years old. I have no children, but I send thirty cents as thank offerings for my thirty dolls, all in the best of health!'

Well, when the money was counted we found we had nearly two thousand dollars, twenty-five hundred being needed. I had taken to Germantown twenty-four copies of 'Marm Lisa,' as my own thank offering, inscribing the fly-leaf of each book in such a way that it might serve as a souvenir of the occasion. These I intended to sell at the modest sum of a dollar and a half apiece. It was not a modest meeting, however. There was such an overwhelming desire to be thankful and to register thankfulness, then and there, on the spot, that Mr. James Mapes Dodge sold the two dozen books for two hundred and fifty dollars while their embarrassed author stood by not knowing whether to laugh or cry at her sudden rise in value. The rest of the money came in without delay, and the Thank Offering Bed is ready for occupancy. Thoughts, vital, vibrant ones, must be undying! So much that was personal went into those offerings that I feel as though some healing power, born of love and sympathy, would hover above that little hospital bed, to soothe the pillow and bring hopeful dreams to those who lie there.

As for the author herself,

> '. . . round her happy footsteps blow
> The authentic airs of Paradise' —

for wherever the happy footsteps of the optimist are planted, there will he feel an occasional breeze from Paradise. The pessimist may stand alongside and feel nothing, but to me that does not disprove the certainty of some near-by Paradise and the authenticity of its 'air,' so much as it proves the thickness of the pessimist's skin!

K. D. W.

At this Thank Offering meeting of the 'Lovers of Children Society' (for that is its real name and it still exists), K. D. W. made an address, after the pennies and the results from the unexpected literary auction had been counted, and in conclusion read some pages from her 'thrice-lucky book,' as she characterized it, pages which reflect the creed of all lovers of children.

I may venture, I think, to give those extracts here, for 'Marm Lisa' is not as widely read as some others of my sister's books. True, it contains, in the picture of Mrs. S. Cora Grubb, a brilliant satire on the manifold humanitarian activities of a woman whose charities begin anywhere but at home; true, the sketch of the little sub-normal heroine has been called one of the best in child-literature, but it contains, alas! much educational theory and practice and education (of children, at least) cannot be called a popular subject. Be warned, then, and read no farther, ye who care not for the un-

popular, for here follow a few extracts from the diary of a kindergartner, of Mistress Mary of the Children's Paradise:

'When we have had a difficult day,' wrote Mistress Mary, 'I go home and sit down in my cosy corner in the twilight, the time and place where I always repeat my *Credo*, which is this:

'It is the children of this year, of every new year, who are to bring the full dawn, that dawn that has been growing since first the world began. It is not only that children re-create the world year by year, decade by decade, by making over human nature; by transforming trivial, thoughtless men and women into serious, earnest ones; by waking in arid natures slumbering seeds of generosity, self-sacrifice, and helpfulness. It is not alone in this way that children are bringing the dawn of the perfect day. It is the children who are going to do all we have left undone, all we have failed to do, all we might have done had we been wise enough, all we have been too weak and stupid to do.

'Among the thousands of tiny things growing up all over the land, some of them under my very wing — watched and tended, unwatched and untended, loved, unloved, protected from danger, thrust into temptation — among them somewhere is the child who will write a great poem that will live forever and ever, kindling every generation to a loftier ideal. There is the child who will write the novel that is to stir men's hearts to nobler issues and incite them to better deeds. There is the child who will paint the greatest picture or carve the greatest statue of the age; another who will deliver his country in an hour of peril; another who will give his life

for a great principle; and another, born more of the spirit than the flesh, who will live continually on the heights of moral being, and dying, draw men after him. It may be I shall preserve one of these children to the race — who knows? It is a peg big enough on which to hang a hope, for every child born into the world is a new incarnate thought of God, an ever-fresh and radiant possibility.'

Having gone thus far in quotation from a long-ago published book, I must take one more step and add Mistress Mary's Prayer, which has been loved and repeated by all kindergartners since its first appearance. It is my sister, in essence — her thoughts, her aspirations, her hand of helpfulness, her heart of love:

MISTRESS MARY'S PRAYER

From 'Marm Lisa'

Father in heaven, it is by the vision of thy relation to us that we can apprehend our relation to these little ones. As we have accepted that high trust, so make us loyal to it. When our feet grow weary and our faith grows dim, help us to follow close after the ever perfect One who taught even as we are trying to teach. He it was whom the common people heard gladly. He it was who disdained not the use of objects and symbols, remembering it was the childhood of the race. He it was who spake in parables and stories, laying bare soul of man and heart of nature, and revealing each by divine analogy. He it was who took the little ones in his arms and blessed them; who set the child in the midst, saying, 'Except ye become as one of these.'

May the afterglow of that inspired teaching ever shine upon the path we are treading. May we bathe our tired spirits in its warmth and glory, and kindle our torches in the splendor of its light. We remember that he told us to feed his lambs. Dear Lord, help all the faithful shepherds who care for the ninety-and-nine that lie in the safe cover of the fold; help us, too, for we are the wandering shepherds whose part it is to go over the bleak hills, up the mountain sides and rocky places, and gather in out of the storm and stress of things all the poor, unshepherded, wee bit lammies that have either wandered forlornly away from shelter, or have been born in the wilderness and know no other home. Such an one has just strayed into the fold from the dreary hill-country. It needs a wiser shepherd than any one of us. Grant that by gentleness, patience, and insight we may atone somewhat for our lack of wisdom and skill. We read among thy mysteries that the divine Child was born of a virgin. May he be born again and born daily in our hearts, already touched by that remembrance and consecrated by its meaning. And this we ask for love's sake. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIV

LITTLE SAINT TIMOTHY

WE have the authority of the Gospels that even the early Christians were sometimes weary of well-doing, for if this were not so, why should they have been warned against that sin, and it is not impossible that later Christians may weary quite as much of 'well-hearing.' Still I feel as if I must add a few more words on Sympathetic Magic, for at least they may serve to encourage struggling authors somewhere in their garrets and lead them to feel that they too may have a share in the work of this needy world.

K. D. W. said once in talking about her books: 'Somehow I never want to touch a theme that is what is called "timely." I can discuss such things in private, of course. I realize their existence and know that they make up a large part of the happiness and unhappiness of the world; but I don't write to reform things or people; I just write what I feel like writing, and somehow I see more good than evil in the world. If I start with a villain he circumvents me by repenting and doing better. Of course if you are a novelist you must try to reflect the times in which you live and you

must treat a larger range of subjects; and, as social conditions are, I am not surprised to find so many writers making use of these themes, but I am no novelist, only a humble story-teller. I often wonder what the "plain people," so-called — the business people — really get from fiction, from reading novels. I think it must be the experiences that are missing in their own lives that they crave to know about. To read of episodes in "high life," travelling, country ways, or anything that one has never had one's self is a pleasure — a pleasure also if one has had similar experiences. Then, too, there are the authors that voice the hearts of the people; theirs are the flames that burn with a purpose. Such were Charles Dickens and Charles Reade, who wrote to show the wrongs that people suffered. Such writers give much, and the people who read their books find therein the thoughts of their own hearts. Now I have no purpose in writing; so people must read my books to be entertained, if they read them at all. I do not think I shall ever write to reform anybody or anything: it's not my métier. Human nature is much the same all over the civilized world, and it is easy to understand; — it's all a habit of mind or heart! I love people and I easily get into relations with them; in fact I can't keep out of relation and that is the reason my life is over-busy and over-full.'

One of the most interesting and valuable of the numberless criticisms and appreciations of my sister's literary work was written long ago in 'The Bookman,' by Calvin Winter, and I reproduce a few extracts from it here, because it voices what I know to be true, yet deem it best that some one else should say.

Kate Douglas Wiggin [says the critic] is at heart a romanticist whose romance is woven not from the stuff that dreams are made of, but from the homespun threads of everyday life. She has an exuberant and unquenchable spirit of optimism, of the sort that bubbles up spontaneously at the most unlikely moments, casting a dash of gold across her pages, just at the time when the shadows seem to lie heaviest. She reaches the heart and she appeals to the memory, because she has in abundance this power of making very ordinary lives seem beautiful; because she writes only of the life that she has seen; and because, from the first story that she wrote up to the most recent, she has always preserved the clear directness of narration, the unaffectedness of form that are the qualities inborn in any one who hopes to interest a youthful audience, to hold bright, eager little faces under the spell of a spoken tale.

The humor is always there, in Kate Douglas Wiggin's books, but it is not the only source of the great love the reading world has for her story-children, nor the highest. That best and highest reason is one which springs from the author's own temperament and view of life. Always, in every guise, and through every disfigurement of poverty,

or pain, or ignorance, she sees the angel in the child. She makes us feel the heart-searching spirituality which is the heritage of all unspoiled childhood; she makes us aware of the brooding presence of the vision and the dream, which is the eternal mystery of innocence. Something of the Wordsworthian realization of 'trailing clouds of glory' haunts us in every one of her creations.

Timothy Jessup, little Saint Timothy, whose adventures as told by my sister and their attendant successes I have already chronicled, has proved in the years since he entered this world to have been more fully an exponent of Sympathetic Magic than any other of her characters.

You remember his early home, or haunt, in the one time in my sister's fiction when she ever depicted a slum.

Children carrying pitchers of beer were often to be seen hurrying to and fro on their miserable errand. . . . There were frowsy, sleepy-looking women hanging out of their windows gossiping with their equally unkempt and haggard neighbors; apathetic men sitting on the doorsteps, in their shirt-sleeves, smoking; a dull, dirty baby disporting itself in the gutter; while the sound of a melancholy accordion (the chosen instrument of poverty and misery) floated from an upper chamber, and added its discordant mite to the general desolation. The sidewalks had apparently never been touched by a broom, and the middle of the street looked more like an elongated junk-heap than anything else. . . .

That was Minerva Court! A little piece of your world, my world, God's world (and the Devil's,) lying peacefully fallow, awaiting the services of some inspired Home Missionary.

As to the dark alleys and tenements on the fringe of this glare and brilliant confusion, this Babel of sound and ant-heap of moving life, one can only surmise and pity and shudder; close one's eyes and ears to it a little, or one could never sleep for thinking of it, yet not too tightly, lest one sleep too soundly, and forget altogether the seamy side of things.

From such surroundings, Timothy Jessup (if it was Jessup), brave little knight, nameless nobleman, tracing his descent back to God, the Father of us all, and bearing the Divine likeness more than most of us; the little Lady Gay — somebody — nobody — anybody — from nobody knows where — destination equally uncertain; and Rags, of pedigree most doubtful, escutcheon quite obscured by blots, but a perfect gentleman, true-hearted and loyal to the core — in fact, 'an angel in fur' — from such surroundings the trio emerged into this world of ours.

Not only did they bear no taint of their origin, but despite their author's sworn statement that she never had a 'purpose' in writing and that she never wrote 'to reform anybody or anything,' they persisted, and still persist, in following the vocation of missionaries and in serving as home-finders for lost, neglected and abandoned children.

Before they began upon their life-work in

this direction, however, they served a unique purpose in the healing of a family feud.

On a railway journey in Ireland, which my sister was taking in 1898, the following letter was handed in to her by the attendant in the dining-car between Dublin and Belfast, the writer having left the train at Drogheda.

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY (IRELAND)
ROYAL MAIL ROUTE,
IN DINING SALOON TRAIN

Private: 1898

Your delightful book 'Timothy's Quest,' apart entirely from its exquisite literary merit, which only those who feel keenly can appreciate, was the means of in some degree freeing the lives of three persons from a cloud of misunderstanding, which had been a source of fifteen years mental agony to one, if not all of them.

The writer wishes to tender some little thanks for writing so true to life, and which from a distance of three thousand miles can bridge over a chasm in life's tragedy.

(No signature.)

How many other 'chasms in life's tragedy' the modest little book may have 'bridged' one can never know, but as to the adoptions it suggested their name is legion. These were not always fortunate, it is true, and some of the hastily assumed responsibilities were in time felt to be very burdensome by their bearers. One would-be parent, in fact, seemed to have

made a very bad choice in the infant she selected, and for years let slip no occasion of notifying my sister of every fresh error the unfortunate boy and youth committed. Fortunately he was snatched from this world just in time to escape the gallows, or so it was reported, although only last year a convict in Dannemora Prison, a 'lifer' on his own statement, wrote to ask me for a copy of 'My Garden of Memory,' on account of the strong influence my sister's work had had upon his life!

When the moving picture of 'Timothy's Quest' was in preparation, K. D. W. was asked to furnish some interesting incidents in regard to the book, and among them was this delightful anecdote, which is told in her own words:

There have been several rather curious coincidences [she wrote] in connection with 'Timothy's Quest' during the thirty years' life of the book — not that coincidences are especially useful for interesting the public in the screen production of a story; and certainly they do not prove anything with regard to its fitness for moving pictures. I wonder, though, if there is not an appeal often hidden in very modest and unobtrusive tales — an appeal of which the author is not fully conscious — which will carry a message in many unexpected directions!

When 'Timothy's Quest' was already quite an old affair I was the guest of the Earl and Countess of

Aberdeen in Dublin, at the time when Lord Aberdeen was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The original invitation was to have been a visit at Dublin Castle but I was delayed and finally reached Ireland when the Aberdeens had moved their official summer residence to the Vice Regal Lodge in Phœnix Park.

The life was very new and interesting, with twenty-four to thirty people to dinner nightly, and a constant procession of all the notable men of Great Britain and her Colonies sitting beside one at table.

Every day I went with Lady Aberdeen on her philanthropic visits here and there; — laying corner stones, visiting hospitals and poor houses, infirmaries, and schools — all the usual routine of diplomatic life.

One morning she said at breakfast: 'We are going to open the first Children's Cottage Home in Ireland this afternoon and I hope you will enjoy the ten mile drive through a lovely part of the country.'

We went in 'semi-state'; open landaus, outriders, aides-de-camps in uniform and all the pomp of Vice Regal formality, for Lord Aberdeen, though a very democratic man and a Liberal in politics was after all, representing the King on these and all similar occasions.

In the course of our drive Lady Aberdeen said: 'I am very tired this afternoon and you know how many speeches I have made this week. If I introduce you, will you not speak for me? This cause is one with which you are familiar from your long study of children.'

'If only you had given me notice!' I demurred feebly. 'I can never think on my feet and how can I

interest that strange audience? Still, since you ask me, I will try and do my best, of course.'

The village hall held perhaps two hundred guests, titled people, gentry, farmers, and villagers. There was a Sir Somebody as Chairman, who first introduced the Manager, Miss M., whose energy and imagination, he said, had made this fine enterprise possible, and I waited on the front row of seats for my own dreaded appearance.

Miss M. was a simply clad, noble-looking person very like our own American Jane Addams. She described the new cottage building that we were to visit and dedicate after the exercises, where we should find twelve happy children who would constitute the first family and then she went on to say, while I down in front, listened surprised and spellbound at the unexpectedness of her speech.

'I want to tell you how the inspiration came to me for this new sort of home for neglected or orphaned children. Ten years ago I read a book by an American author, Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin, called "Timothy's Quest."'

(Great astonishment here on the official front benches and excitement in Lady Aberdeen's face.)

'I had worked among bevies and crowds of children all my life, often depressed and discouraged by certain features common to large institutions, and in this book the hero, Timothy, was as heartsick as I of the Home with a capital "H," and sighed for a home with a little "h" and an adopted mother. These like a young crusader he started out to find, and the tale of his Quest forms the story.'

(By this time, of course, I was on the verge of tears!)

'I could never get out of my mind' (she went on) 'that phrase — the home with the little "h," contrasting its comforts with those of an enormous Asylum with a high brick wall around it. Accordingly I began to work and to save, and later on to interest others in gathering the money for the cottage we shall shortly visit. I shall write to the American lady and tell her the outcome of her appealing story; how, to-day if she only knew it, we are making it all come true. There is a new home with a little "h" just at the foot of the hill and soon there will be a proud, happy, adopted mother in it, sitting down to supper with a dozen children!'

(The little woman was simply irresistible; she made me feel for the moment like a Joan of Arc, or a Florence Nightingale.)

Lady Aberdeen rose majestically, as if a miracle had been wrought in the presence of the audience, and spoke somewhat as follows:

'It sounds too much like a fairy-story to be accepted easily; but I, who have never read the book, have brought the author here to-day, as she is our guest in Dublin. I am sure she was as ignorant as I of what was to happen, and Miss M. must indeed look upon her presence as a miracle. The two wonder-workers will make friends after the meeting, and meantime I am sure Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin will wish to come to the platform and say something to the audience.'

It was a great little moment and I was greeted with the same sort of applause that delights the ears of the magician who has apparently made grass grow where none grew before. The more they couldn't understand how I came there, the more they applauded. I forgot the nobility and gentry,

the strange audience, the gold lace and glitter of the official uniforms, and spoke. I cannot remember a word that I said; it did not have to be eloquent, under such favorable circumstances, but I am fairly confident that it was! No human being possessed with a modicum of brains, and considerable heart, could have been denied the right word. My impression is that I spoke several hundred right words, breathlessly, gratefully, holding back tears that colored the voice, but did not betray lack of self-control.

My impression is that the whole affair might have been staged in Paradise, and perhaps it was!

There is just one more story I must tell in regard to the magic 'Timothy,' and I think I may well claim a little latitude in speaking of a book, which, since it is dedicated to me, is one of the brightest jewels in my crown.

A few years ago I was dining with a New York family which has for generations been dedicated to the service of humanity, a dinner at which many unusual and more or less famous people were present, and which proved before long to be of especial interest to me.

The talk at the table chanced to be of a literary nature and finally crystallized into a kind of 'testimony meeting' as to the influence of books. A missionary was present, on a furlough from India, and when he had told a series of anecdotes which had delighted the company, he looked about the table and said, question-

ingly, 'I wonder if any of you know a little book called "Timothy's Quest"?'

We all did, as it happened, and waited for his story, the author's sister listening with flushed cheeks and a panting heart.

'The book was sent from America to one of the workers in a mission-station of ours in the hills of India,' said the missionary, 'and as books were rare visitors and this one particularly appealing, it passed from hand to hand until we all knew it by heart.

'There chanced that year to be one of the recurrent famines in the plains-district below, and now and then a sufferer climbed up to us for help, a help which all the people knew well was never refused by the Christians.

'It was towards dusk one evening when a ragged skeleton of twelve years, perhaps, who might have been a boy in his fortunate moments, appeared in the roadway dragging in a cart a girl-child a few years younger. There was very little human about either of them save appealing eyes and outstretched hands, but the lad made it plain that this was his sister, that father and mother both were dead in the famine, that he had heard of the Christians in the hill-country and had half-dragged, half-led his starving charge to us, a twenty-mile journey from his native village.

'It was a great achievement for a boy of his

age, even had he been suitably fed and clothed, but in his condition it was nothing less than a marvel. He had come to and trusted the Christians and the first thing to do was to make him one of the band. The two children were bathed and fed and clothed at once by tender hands, and that very night we baptized the boy "Timothy" and the girl "Gabrielle," for we felt that they had close kinship with the book we had learned to love.'

That was all the simple tale, but it was greeted with a rainbow of mingled smiles and tears that arched the beautiful table, and when, at the close of the dinner, I made my way to the story-teller and proudly claimed my relationship to the creator of the knightly 'Timothy,' I quoted to him what she herself said of her work in life:

'My books have brought me such joy and such richness of compensation that I can only hope that some of it has overflowed the cup and given pleasure elsewhere, for I should always like to be a "sharing" sort of person if I might, believing with Lowell, that the gift without the giver is bare.'

CHAPTER XXV

AFTERGLOW

The afterglow is no less beautiful than the dawn to the traveller who loves every inch of the road.

K. D. W.

WHAT shall I say of 'My Garden of Memory,' last of my sister's books? What shall I say of the life that it pictured, more and other than I have already said? She who lived it saw it from one point of view; her sister from another; the world from a third, perhaps. No one of the three saw it fully; to no one was it all revealed; for every life, even to the liver, is a mystery of growth and unfolding.

To me this world is a different place without her; it is as if an eclipse had darkened the sun and in the grey light all outlines are obscured. If, then, what I have said in this little volume but imperfectly shows forth my subject, it is because I see, 'as in a glass, darkly.'

A great English critic has said, 'Sooner or later the sublimest imaginations pale before the simple telling of a personal truth, for the most personal truth is likewise the most universal'; and in so far as I have been able to tell that truth, so far must the appeal of my book extend.

The reviewer of a late life of Robert Louis Stevenson, the well-beloved, raises the old ethical and critical question which is likely to face every biographer of any hero short of arch-angelic stature — whether he shall present a figure so idealized that the heavens cannot possibly fall while he supports them, or whether he shall tell the whole truth about his subject and let the heavens take their chance.

The present biographer has striven to guide her chariot between the two courses, believing that she has neither idealized her subject, so far as she is able to see it with unclouded eye, nor that she has omitted any portion of the whole truth, as far as she knows it. As to the heavens, she has a profound belief that they are able to take care of themselves and will forever be sustained with, or without, her aid.

For K. D. W., 'youth's sweet-scented manuscript did never close,' and 'spring-time never vanish'd with the rose.' She herself said that the afterglow was as beautiful as the dawn to the traveller who had loved every mile of the road, and so indeed it was for her, in spite of much suffering and failing health as the end of the journey drew near. The ever-increasing frequency of those agonizing headaches, which no one ever diagnosed, and from which no physician ever relieved her, and the equally increasing difficulty in obtaining even a modicum

THE AUTHOR OF 'REBECCA' AT THE WELL

THE EMPTY CHAIR

of sleep, made her life one almost impossible to live with youthful ardor, and yet she lived it to its close with unabated interest in men and things and with ever-growing helpfulness to all who sought for strength and courage from her springs of love.

Marcel Proust, in the first book of his idyll of departed days ('A la Recherche du Temps Perdu'), speaks of the perfume of a name and of a memory, and adds that he has often longed to see a certain some-one again without realizing that it was because she recalled to him a blooming hedge of hawthorn. It is thus that I think always of my sister — as a blooming hedge of hawthorn in the fresh English countryside, or as a New England hayfield, all timothy-grass and swaying daisies and buttercups, with bobolinks hanging over.

Her work was done with joy, from her first book to her last, for, as she said herself, she never attempted a subject she could not love. As I look back upon her autobiography — 'My Garden of Memory' — I see that she had been preparing for it, in one way or another, through all her literary life. One of those tin trunks, or boxes, which I have already mentioned, in which she kept her papers and a specimen of which we hastened to buy in London, or Edinburgh, whenever we crossed the water, held for years programmes, newspaper and magazine

clippings, criticisms of books and plays, published articles of a biographical nature, half-sheets of manuscript, and pages of those jottings, or thoughts, which every writer knows are lost if not at once recorded.

Now and then Kate dived into the depths of the box and brought to the surface material for a brief biographical sketch, such as she contributed in later years to the 'Youth's Companion' on her childhood days, and to 'The Ladies' Home Journal' and 'Good Housekeeping' on her experiences in education, and her experiments as a writer of plays.

After my mother's death, however, in 1921, when we sadly needed an engrossing occupation for our days, we set to work upon the treasured tin box and, devoting one room to the task, began resolutely to reduce the long-hoarded papers to order. Many of them, of course, had completely lost importance in the lapse of years; others were as meaningless as secret ciphers without a key; but from others still we gained great pleasure and amusement, and

> 'As the atoms dance in tune
> When they hear from far the rune,'

so these various scraps soon began to assemble themselves around certain centres and to declare themselves material for chapters.

When this stage had been reached, the autobiography, although yet nameless, was begun, and went on the more easily because parts of the first ten or twelve chapters had already been written and published either in book form, as 'The Girl and the Kingdom,' and 'A Child's Journey with Dickens,'[1] or in the various articles already mentioned.

I find the first mention of the autobiography — only a word, however — in K. D. W.'s Line-a-Day Book on January 7, 1918, which must have been one of the 'diving-days' I have described.

On April 10, 1921, is the following entry: 'Much work with Nora from now on to the 15th, sorting voluminous records for autobiography.' From that date until the book was completed, we continued to winnow the material whenever we were together, and for at least five years we had it constantly in mind, discussed topics and titles, and wrote lengthy letters to each other concerning matters that might be omitted and others that absolutely must be taken up.

The first three months of the year 1923, I spent with my sister at her home in New York, and as Mr. Riggs was absent for the time, seeking health in a warmer climate, and as the cares of housekeeping and entertaining were

[1] Houghton Mifflin Company, 1912.

thus somewhat lessened, Kate devoted herself to the autobiography, which I found had greatly increased in size during our separation and had advanced to the dignity of typewritten manuscript. There were still many papers to examine, however, and Kate insisted that I, as the younger sister, and thus, probably, the one with the greater number of years before her, should take charge of these, deposit them in another of the invaluable tin boxes, mark it 'Posthumous,' and engage to edit a second volume to be called 'Life and Letters of Kate Douglas Wiggin.' I argued on my part — for we were both half in jest — that she had a stronger constitution and a greater tenacity of life than I, and that she would be the one to prepare the second volume herself. However, despite my protests, the box was eventually marked 'Posthumous,' and one or the other of us would lightly say, as we turned over the papers, 'Oh, put it in "Posthumous"!' or, 'Let it go to "Posthumous"!' if we were in doubt about a certain letter or incident we were discussing.

So I found when the heart-searching task of going through my sister's papers devolved upon me, many packages marked, 'Posthumous,' 'For Biography, if Nora survives me,' 'What I cannot say for myself,' etc., and thus I feel as if the writing of this book were a

sacred duty as well as a dear privilege. There is something that Armando Palacio Valdes says in his 'Novel of a Novelist,' which has been a solace to my days of grief and may perhaps be a comfort to others who have known sorrow:

> Cease, then, to afflict thyself. This little I, which thou so much lovest, fades away in appearance only. Nothing of what really constitutes it, that is, none of thy ideas, or of thine actions, ceases to exist. They all remain imprinted upon the world, and enjoy immortality. And those who, like thee, have passed their lives communicating to others not only their thoughts but their most intimate emotions will enjoy with even greater security this happy future.

If I have contributed in any degree to ensure this 'happy future' for my sister's name, and for her work, I shall count myself fortunate, and, as I look back now upon those first eight months of 1923, I realize that, as I bent all my energies toward helping her with the book that had grown so dear to us both, I must have been shadowed by an unacknowledged fear that it never would be finished without my assistance.

During that three months' visit to New York, of which I have spoken, when Kate and I were constantly together, we carried about with us wherever we went a sheaf of titles for the autobiography, and, like the Ancient Mariner, whenever we met three gallants

bidden to a wedding feast, we detained one of them and secured his opinion upon one or other of the long-thought-of names.

After these weeks of discussion, 'My Garden of Memory' was finally decided upon, and under that title the almost completed book was left with the publishers when the author and her husband sailed for Europe on April 21, 1923. A serious attack of illness on the ship — neither then, nor ever, fully understood — and another in London immediately afterward, greatly weakened my sister, and her letters to me at that time show her apprehension as to the fate of her precious book and her doubt as to whether the sight of old friends and the thrill of again visiting her ever-beloved England, would give her the added energy she needed for its completion. Improved somewhat in health she left London in June for a delightful Convalescent Home at Harrow-on-the-Hill and there gradually began again upon the work she was so keenly desirous to finish.

In the meantime the copy was in the printer's hands and the 'Small Sister' was anxiously watching its every page. My brother-in-law, who had returned to America for a few weeks' salmon-fishing and whose heart was also bound up in the book, rendered valuable assistance in proof-reading, for, as Kate always said, he was born to the trade. Pierre Larousse, you know,

editor of the 'Grand Dictionnaire Universel' spoke of his proof-readers as his 'collaborateurs les plus chers'; and Victor Hugo referred to them once as those 'modestes savants' who are so well able to give fresh lustre to the plumes of genius. So, as 'modestes savants,' George in his camp on the Miramichi River, and I at Quillcote, on my own river-bank, corrected our proof-sheets and waited for the final chapters of the story.

In the meantime the date of the annual Dorcas Fair and Lawn-Party, often mentioned in my sister's Reminiscences, but never held at Quillcote since my mother's death, made its more or less dreaded (by the hostess!) approach. When the brilliant morning finally dawned, it brought with it a cablegram from my sister, Honorary President of the far-famed Dorcas Society, wishing its members all success and sending a generous contribution to the receipts of the day. An answer of gratitude and good wishes was at once dispatched, and we all — guests, neighbors and friends — felt a certain inward exhilaration as if we had had an encouraging little talk with our dear and gracious lady.

The last chapters of the book, as well as I could tell from subsequent letters, must have been posted from Harrow about that date, and it would be difficult to say which of the two,

author or proof-reader, suffered more from the hours and days of blank, inactive waiting until the manuscript should appear and be acknowledged.

Kate's letter of August 9, 1923, began:

> Heaven grant that I shall hear from you soon about Chapters forty and forty-one, and still more that I shall have a cable about the last Chapter! I fear, though, that you have judged it best not to cable, for I have given you every address and instruction to ensure prompt delivery.

The letter of next day runs:

> I have finally resigned myself to the fact of not hearing of the arrival of Chapters forty and forty-one and receiving a cable in regard to the last Chapter. I have held my breath since last Tuesday morning and it is Friday. They have been juggling with the mails over here lately, using American instead of fast British boats, but they can't juggle with cablegrams.

When, after several days of what appeared to be not only British but American 'juggling with the mails,' the manuscript finally appeared, was read, and proved, in spite of the writer's pain and weakness, to be a fitting end to the beloved book, my joy and gratitude were boundless. The motor-car could not carry me swiftly enough to the village telegraph office whence I dispatched the following message:

MRS. GEORGE C. RIGGS
Blank House, Harrow-on-the-Hill; England
Last chapters came to-day. Delightful. Slight changes ensure perfection. Psalm forty-seven; verse one.[1]

NORA

When I learned, as I soon did, that the cablegram had been received and that Kate's relief and happiness were even greater than my own, I had a few hours of pure joy, which were to be my last on this mortal plane, for the end was very near then, and on the morning of August 24, 1923, my sister's spirit slipped away to other spheres of action.

Her affairs were in perfect order and every interest and charity, public and private, which had looked to her for support was arranged for with that thoroughness which had always characterized her work. A letter folded inside her Will suggested to her husband and sister a suitable disposition for her personal effects and her desire that her ashes should be scattered on the waters of the Saco River whose 'faint far-away murmur' she had long ago said would be the last sound she expected to hear in life.

Her letters to her husband, treasured in his strong-box for more than twenty-eight years,

[1] O, clap your hands, all ye people;
Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

were for the most part destroyed by him in 1924, as being 'too dear for the world's possessing,' but one of them, which he entrusted to me, furnishes so perfect an epitome of the life of Kate Douglas Wiggin, of what she longed to be and to do, that it may serve for her epitaph and for a fitting close to this 'Book of Remembrance.'

QUILLCOTE, *July 23rd*

Yes, dear George, I agree with you that I must try to live more quietly in future and to conserve my energies as much as possible. Yet the world sadly needs brightening and there can never be too many persons who are willing to use such gifts as they possess, small or large, to amuse and cheer and delight their friends, or to uplift and strengthen and inspire the dull lives of their humbler neighbors. Gifts are given to us to use; it is only in abuse that they grow dangerous; and abuse can never come to them when they are used modestly and generously, where no rivalry can taint them and no gratified vanity cheapen them. The too-great modesty, self-depreciation, self-consciousness, reserve, stiffness, shyness — whatever it may be, which keeps people from using their talents now and then for the common good, is not by any means wholly a virtue; it is just as often pure selfishness, indifference, lack of interest in people's pleasure — in a word, unwillingness to serve. When my heart has ceased to beat, I should like to have lived so that you could slip these words under the coffin-lid that covers me: *What she had she gave gladly — hoping it might somehow please, or help, those who had less. If it was*

little, at least she tried to multiply and fructify it by use; but were it little, or much, she wanted to show her worthiness to possess, by proving herself willing to serve.

THE END

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